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ABSTRACT

This volume on language issues within Australia contains five research papers: "Patterns of Inter-Cultural Communication in Melbourne Factories: Some Research in Progress" (Michael Clyne); "Developing Proficiency Scales for Communicative Assessment" (D. E. Ingram, Elaine Wylie); "Rapid Profile: A Second Language Screening Procedure" (Alison Mackey, Manfred Pienemann, Ian Thornton); "Language Use in Classrooms in Western Samoan Schools" (Joseph Lo Bianco, Anthony Liddicoat); and "The International English Language Testing System (IELTS): The Speaking Test" (D. E. Ingram).

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LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

THE NATIONAL LANGUAGES INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED

The National Languages Institute of Australia was set up by the Federal Government in 1989 and the Central Directorate commenced operations in June 1990.

The NLIA works in keeping with the principles of the National Policy on Languages. This policy functions to guide language choices so that they are rational, comprehensive, just and balanced and so that they meet Australia's economic, social and cultural needs.

The four basic principles of the National Policy on Languages are :

- English and literacy for all
- Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- A language other than English for all
- Equitable and widespread language services

The NLIA is a decentralized, multi-institutional organization which aims to focus expertise in research and development on language issues within Australia. The NLIA is made up of:

- The **Central Directorate** (based in Melbourne) is responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the NLIA and assuring a national focus for work in languages and language education. The Directorate also houses the **Nationally Co-ordinated Projects** of the NLIA. These are projects which look at specific language issues. Current projects include "ESL Development: Language and Literacy in Schools" and the "Key Languages Project" which involves the development of profiles of the key

languages of the National Policy on Languages.

- **The Language Testing Centre** (NLIA/LTC) is based at the University of Melbourne. The aims of NLIA/LTC are: to promote research and development in language testing, to evaluate programmes of language learning teaching, to develop tests and other measurement instruments and to provide consultancy services

- **The Language Testing and Curriculum Centre** (NLIA/LTACC) is based at Griffith University. NLIA/LTACC aims to promote research and development in language curriculum design, to relate testing/curriculum design to needs of industry, education and culture and to offer short courses in language testing and curriculum design.

- **The Language & Society Centre** (NLIA/LASC) is based at Monash University. The focus of NLIA/LASC is to conduct research on bilingualism, language policy, intercultural communication and sociolinguistic aspects of language and language education in Australia.

- **The Language Acquisition Research Centre** (NLIA/LARC) is based at the University of Sydney in association with the University of Western Sydney. The aims of NLIA/LARC are to promote research into second language acquisition and its application to language teaching and to foster the professional development of language teachers

- **The Language and Technology Centre** (NLIA/LATTICE) is based at the University of Queensland. The aims of NLIA/LATTICE are to provide and support computer and technology based research resources and conduct technology-based research into language, linguistics, language teaching and learning. A **database and clearing house on languages** is also housed at the

University of Queensland. The database and clearing house provides information on languages, language teaching, linguistics and similar areas.

- **The Unit for Professional Training** (NLIA/UPT) is based at the Australian TESOL Training Centre in Sydney. NLIA/UPT offers non-award courses in professional training for TESOL trainers, training skills for professionals and training for teachers of language other than English.

- **The Centre for Workplace Communication and Culture** (NLIA/CWCC) is based at the University of Technology, Sydney, in partnership with the University of Wollongong . NLIA/CWCC aims to foster understanding of language and cultural issues in the workplace and to assess the needs of industry in the light of award restructuring and to develop suitable training packages to help industry capitalize on present linguistic resources.

- **Teaching and Curriculum Centres** are to be established in major cities in all states. These Centres will be local agents of the Institute and will provide a link between the research of the NLIA and the teaching profession. They will assist in putting the research into practice and will collect and provide information about language education and other language issues. As part of their work, the Teaching and Curriculum Centres will mount and organize short courses for language professionals and liaise with state education authorities, existing subject associations, etc.

LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Language and Language Education is the title of the Working

Papers of the NLIA. This title reflects the diversity of the NLIA's work in language and the link between the Institutes work and the language professions. The working papers aim to present the research work undertaken by the various Centres and Units of the NLIA and to disseminate information relevant to the aims and objectives of the NLIA.

Language and Language Education would welcome contributions in all areas relating to the four principles of the National Policy on Languages. Contributions should be sent to the Editor at the address below on disk, preferably 5cm disk (for both MacIntosh and IBM) accompanied by a hard copy of the text.

Language and Language Education will be published twice yearly. A subscription sheet can be found at the end of this volume.

Information about *Language and Language Education* and other publications from the NLIA can be obtained from the Central Directorate.

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PATTERNS OF INTER-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN MELBOURNE FACTORIES: SOME RESEARCH IN PROGRESS[1]

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INTRODUCTION

The "multiculturalism" paradigm is well established in policies and the provision of services in Australia. So films and other programs are transmitted in community languages with English sub-titles on SBS-TV, public libraries stock books and other materials in a wide range of languages, and community language programs in schools are usually available to all children. While there have been major advances in recent years in the delivery of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs for adults, including those in the work place, the structures and goals are still directed towards making it easier for non-English-speaking migrants to communicate with "Australians". In reality, 40% of those employed in manufacturing industries are non-native speakers of English. The proportion is higher in the "lower" levels of the work-force (i.e. on the factory floor). Many workers communicate in English for most of the day in the work domain with non-native speakers of the language from other ethnolinguistic backgrounds.

This paper reports on research conducted in the Language and Society Centre of the National Languages Institute of Australia, Monash University, into interaction in English between non-native speakers, largely with higher levels of competence in the language, from *different* ethnolinguistic backgrounds. I shall discuss the selection of workplaces and research sites, methods of data collection and analysis, report on insights gained so far on the

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nature of inter-cultural communication, and the implications of this research for policies and the Training Guarantee Scheme.

Australia not only has very specific needs in this area; it offers unique opportunities for research. Where else do sizeable numbers of, say, Turks and Vietnamese, or of Lebanese, Poles, and Chinese live and work together at close quarters? Such groups have had no previous history of culture contact and they share few communication principles that they do not also have in common with "mainstream" Australians. Prior to the fairly recent arrival of large numbers of Chinese and Vietnamese speakers and other Asians in Australia, non-English speaking migrants perceived that they shared a common set of communication patterns (a commonality of foreignness) even though they might have no common language other than English. These patterns distinguished them and native English speakers from one another.

SELECTION OF WORK-PLACES AND RESEARCH SITES

Three main criteria were applied for the selection of the areas to be investigated:

(i) four major *industries* employing large numbers of non-English speakers were selected: Heavy (automobile), textiles, electronics, and catering;

(ii) the *location* of the factory within the metropolitan area of Melbourne (northern, western, south-eastern, eastern), since this influences the ethnolinguistic composition;

(iii) the national origin of the parent company (U.S., Australia, Japan, Germany), since this may influence the company's sensitivity to inter-cultural problems.

The work places selected were:

A. Car factory of American origin in the northern suburbs,

B. Textile factory of Australian origin in the western suburbs,

C. Car factory of Japanese origin in the south-eastern suburbs,

D. Electronics factory of German origin in the eastern suburbs.

In addition, data is being gathered in the catering section of a migrant hostel in the south-eastern suburbs, at the office of an Adult Migration Education Centre, at an office of the Commonwealth Employment Service, and at meetings of a multicultural parents' group at a high school in the south-eastern suburbs.

As a result of negotiation with management, workers and unions, and observation, a number of research sites were chosen in each workplace - on the basis of ethnolinguistic composition, communication richness of the work situation, and relatively low noise level.

METHODOLOGY OF DATA COLLECTION

Data collection began with a period of observation by a field worker. In this way the field workers could acquaint themselves with the communication situations, select research sites, and gain rapport with potential informants. However, most of our corpus comprises spontaneous communication audio-recorded from workplace interactions between key non-English-speaking background (NESB) informants wearing a lapel microphone and other NESB speakers. The following factors determined the selection of the key informants:

(i) their willingness to participate,

(ii) their ethnolinguistic background,

(iii) their frequent need to communicate at work with people from different NESBs,

(iv) the range of their communicative acts other than just set routines, including receiving and making requests and complaints, giving their advice;

(v) their gender and position in the hierarchy of the company.

Where possible, cultural background, gender, and status are alternated in the choice of key informants at different research sites to facilitate assessing the effects of those on the communication patterns (e.g. If at one research site, we have communication between a male Croatian 'superordinate' and a female Vietnamese 'subordinate', we would try to find opportunities for similar interactions in another research site between a Vietnamese 'superordinate' and a Croatian 'subordinate' and between a female Croatian 'superordinate' and a male Vietnamese 'subordinate' in a third). Though status within company hierarchies is sometimes related to gender and ethnicity, this is certainly not always the case. Thus, the inter-cultural communication situation with cultural background as a co-determinate of communication patterns could be contrasted with 'standard' monolingual work situations (especially on the factory floor) where status marks power in the way in which people communicate. Follow-up interviews within a few days of the original interaction (cf. Neustupny 1985) facilitate interpretation of inter-cultural communication breakdown.

A second smaller corpus of data is derived from videotapes of meetings of employee participation (quality circle) groups, comprising people from different NESB groups, in which ideas are discussed and reports presented. This data is therefore of a more formal nature than the spontaneous communication on the audiotapes. The videos also give us an opportunity to assess the relation between verbal and non-verbal communication across cultures.

The emphasis on spontaneous communication departs from an established tradition in this field of research to use elicited role-play to gather data (See e.g. Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989, Olesky 1989). Role play is not an altogether adequate substitute for naturalistic data in that informants will then tend to behave the way they feel they 'ought' to. We have found that 90 minutes of taping is a sufficiently long time to avoid people 'playing their roles'. This is particularly so in crisis situations. On the other hand, we need to consider the effect on speech and dyadic

communication of speakers staring at the microphone.

The method of transcription adopted for this project is based largely on Ehlich and Rehbein's (1976) Halbinterpretative Analyse Transkription (HIAT) where some of the interpretation is already done during the transcription.[2]

ON THE NATURE OF INTER-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

This project is concerned with human verbal interaction. As in other human behaviour, variation in verbal interaction is determined by individual and sub-cultural (social class, gender, occupational) as well as by cultural variables. Communication occurs not only in a social setting but also in a cultural context in which people conform to or contravene behavioural norms. While we are attempting to concentrate on cultural differences, we appreciate that these intersect with sub-cultural and individual ones and that it will not always be possible to separate them.

The project emphasizes two aspects of verbal interaction where language-specific rules are closely linked with cultural value systems. One is the *pragmatic* level of language - that aspect concerned with communicative function, communicative intention and communicative effects of utterances, i.e. language as an instrument of action. Austin (1963) and Searle (1969) developed the study of speech acts (doing things with words), such as promises, requests, complaints, and apologies. The other 'prominent aspect of human interaction in our research is the *organization of discourse* (i.e. continuous passages beyond the sentence level), especially of *conversations* (cf. Henne and Rehbock 1982). A major focus of this is the sequencing of conversations. Variation in this can influence both the decoding of the message and attitudes towards the speaker.

Turn-taking involves sequencing of the parts played by each speaker in a given interaction. (Its investigation was pioneered by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, e.g. 1974). Goodwin (1981: 21) defines turn-taking as 'the process through which the party doing the talk at the moment is changed'. This includes allowing the

person a turn to speak, keeping your turn when someone else wants it, and appropriating a turn through interruption. Procedures adopted by a particular speaker can also determine the outcome of the communication, as I shall show through examples. Speech acts and discourse organization cannot be isolated from other aspects of language and we sometimes need to take grammatical, lexical, phonological and prosodic (intonational) phenomena into account.

Our study can contribute to an understanding of how people from different cultures communicate, for the inter-cultural dyads and any problems in communication will highlight the contrasts in their verbal behaviour. However, it will not always be possible to come to conclusions on culture-specific behaviour - firstly because people do not always interact the same way in second language (and culture) and first language (and culture) contexts, as has become apparent in various studies of learner's speech (Faerch and Kasper 1983, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1986, Olesky 1989). Also, we do not have enough information on pragmatics and discourse organization in all the relevant monolingual first language (L1) contexts. The volume resulting from the Cross Cultural Speech Act Research Project (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989) covers only six language and cultural contexts, and there have not been even fragmentary studies of the appropriate aspects of most of the languages we would require to check phenomena in the English of our informants. Even with the now widely recognized limitations of contrastive analysis between languages as an instrument to predict errors (see Corder 1981), the essential prerequisites for such an analysis are not available. The multilateral data base covering many cultures ensures that we do not regard as absolute what is relative (See below, Section 7).

Where there is no appropriate research literature on the relevant L1 phenomena, we are drawing on resource persons, native speakers (linguists or language teachers) who can advise us on culture-specific behaviour. However, we are concentrating on how inter-cultural communication works, what types of problems occur, and how they can be resolved or avoided rather than on

questions of pragmatic interference. We are encountering a range of communication that runs smoothly throughout, communication that is totally unsuccessful from the point of view of at least one of the parties, communication with problems that are resolved within the discourse, and communication which necessarily includes a component of negotiation of meaning (See Section 5). Unsuccessful communication, where communicative effect does not correspond to communicative intention, can be characterized as either *non-communication* (where the message is not getting across) and *miscommunication* (where an unintended message is getting across). Both of these can be regarded as contributing to communication breakdown. Miscommunication is the greater problem as it often goes unnoticed and can lead to communication conflict, in which people's dignity and trust, i.e. their face, are threatened. Brown and Levinson (1978) in their framework of politeness in communication distinguish between negative face 'the want of every "competent adult member" that his actions be unimpeded by others' (Brown and Levinson 1978: 67) and positive face 'the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others' (p. 67).

A specific case of non-communication is *parallel discourse*, where the two parties are talking about different topics based on a common starting-point without taking much notice of one another's discourse.

In our experience, communication conflict is frequently caused less by miscommunication than by an attempted realization of a speech act and/ or by turn-taking behaviour which, according to the norms of *one* of the interactants in a dyad is considered inappropriate or impolite.

Not only is inter-cultural communication breakdown the result of people from different cultures encoding/decoding messages in different ways. The response to communication breakdown also varies across cultures in accordance with face-saving requirements in the culture concerned. Among culture-based reactions to a communication breakdown are:

(i) ignoring that the communication breakdown

has occurred;

(ii) admitting that it has occurred according to particular (culture-specific) rules of politeness;

(iii) blaming the other party for the communication breakdown;

(iv) employing a solidarity marker such as laughter.

The Work-place

It is not the intention of the project to offer a critique of the institution of the industrial work-place or, for that matter, of the capitalist economic system. We are attempting to analyse inter-cultural communication for its own sake and at the same time contribute to the alleviation of communication problems which have social, psychological and economic consequences (See Section 7).

THE CORPUS: A FEW EXAMPLES

So far we have 125 hours of spontaneous communication on audiotape and four hours of meetings on videotape. There are twenty-six key informants who have worn a lapel microphone so far and, of course, they have taped their interactions with many other people. The backgrounds of the key informants are: Filipino, Indonesian, Malaysian Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, Fijian Indian, Sri Lankan (various ethnic groups), Austrian, Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Maltese, Salvadorian, Finnish.

The speech acts most prominently represented are complaints, requests, directives (instructions), and apologies. Speech acts are not as distinct as they have often been described in works on theoretical linguistics. Complaints and apologies often share one segment of discourse. The same speech act (e.g. complaint, request, apology) is sometimes realized again and again in quite different ways, using different schemata (Rumelhart 1975) - cognitive structures through which interactants can apply their knowledge of the world to interpret the intention of discourse in

an encounter. For instance, a self-initiated apology from a Polish woman process worker in an interaction with a Malaysian-Chinese leading hand comprises the following schemata:

(i) taking the blame:
'it was my fault alright'

(ii) simultaneously expressing uncertainty about the responsibility:
'I don't know whose fault'
'Hong told me not to tell anyone it was # # mixed up'

(iii) giving a justification (Cf. Rehbein 1972):
'because I find that in the middle of the job was. accidentally i find oh # what's going wrong and after all i. check every part i put in'
'it was their + boards i didn't want to the reason was because was mixed up the components'

(iv) an appeal for sympathy based on her own sensitivity: .
'i'm very sensitive'
'he (her husband) said "oh you should leave that job"'

(v) an indirect apology:
'I feel so + so bad y'know'.

The Malaysian-Chinese interlocutor does not comprehend the purpose of the lengthy apology. It may reflect the Eastern European 'patronage system' in which the 'subordinate' has to gain the favour of the 'superordinate' to get him/ her out of difficulties or in order to advance economically or professionally. In some cultures, face is threatened by apologizing, in others by not apologizing, in still others by not apologizing appropriately. In this exchange the interlocutor, irritated by the continual expression of anxiety and guilt, tries to stop the apology sequence by:

(i) the multiple use of the Australian routine 'Don't worry'

(ii) expressing her understanding:

'For me ++ is nothing worrying me'
'I understand these things'
'It just do happen'

(iii) digressing from the topic:
'Is your husband back back from Atlantic?'

(iv) laughter as a solidarity strategy.

None of these responses satisfy the Polish woman but her 'superior' is finally able to give the desired reassurance: 'I'll fix up for you'.

The Malaysian-Chinese leading hand, together with other Asian employees, is also at the receiving end of a speech act sequence comprising a lengthy set of schemata. This time it is from her Croatian male supervisor who is complaining about the work ethics of the women. There are two main schemata:

(i) 'It is the responsibility of all of you to work hard and well
I don't understand the one things how peoples are not ashamed to sitting doing nothing'
'we need output from that area and i see people who are soldering then cleaning the boards'

(ii) Soldering is not a wonderful job, but it is very important
'you know how much we need the soldering ++++ we desperately need soldering people to do e...[Name] or to do any # job on soldering in the area'
'i know it's # not # it's not ++++ easy job'

and two subsidiary schemata:

(i) Solderers must not waste their time on cleaning

(ii) Some people are not doing anything.

The Croatian relentlessly dominates the interaction. There is a mismatch between his speech act requesting a reason and his turn-taking behaviour which prevents a reason from being given:

'What's the reason + if they go there and they sit there ten minutes and after that they just disappear + I would like to see what's the

reason is there any reason for that tell me.'

The Malaysian-Chinese's request for confirmation that he really wants a reason is acceded.

'yeah I would like to have a reason'.

So negotiation of meaning is not possible due to inter-cultural differences in the underlying assumptions of the communication (whether it is a monologue or a dialogue).

The nexus between complaint and apology (or communication) is exemplified in another exchange between the two above interlocutors, this time without any passive participants. Sometimes it is the complainer who ends up having to apologize after wrongly accusing someone. Not all factory complaints yield an apology, probably because of status relations. In the case under consideration, the supervisor expresses his disapproval and power through interrogatives:

'what do you stop changing these things?'

imperatives:

'tell me how many connectors you changed hundreds of it'

and modals:

'you may not destroy these connectors'

'you may not put them in the rubbish'

'you can keep them separate and count them you know that'.

Every reproach receives an immediate response, usually a justification:

'these are all from last week'

'I have asked them to send some extra connectors'

'but Monday we have started with the new carrier and they're all good + no rejects'.

In contrast to the previous segment, this one is not characterized by extremely asymmetrical turns where the Croatian monopolizes the floor, probably because he is involved in dyadic communication and not giving a 'public' performance.

Watts (1989) distinguishes between cultures such as Swiss

German in which each person puts their views and others such as British, where there is a 'sharing of the text', where topic and topic change are negotiated. Both in our meeting videos and in the tapes of routine communication on the factory floor, individuals from particular cultural groups, that is Singhalese, Pakistanis, Burghers from Sri Lanka, Croats, Hungarians, Austrians, are likely to have longer turns, to appropriate turns more often and are more likely to prevent others from taking over than our informants from other groups. In some cultures (notably Finnish), much use is made of 'thinking pauses' which are not to be interrupted by people thinking aloud (Schröder 1987, Lenz 1990). Long silences also occur for different reasons in Vietnamese, where it should be seen in relation to the cultural importance of harmony and deference to authority (See Do Toan 1989). In our corpus we have selected as key informants people from 'long turn' groups who interact at work with people from other 'long turn' groups (e.g. Croatian/ Burgher) and those from 'short turn/ long silence groups' interacting with those from other 'short turn/ long silence groups' (e.g. Finnish/ Vietnamese). In this way we hope to ascertain how much these common factors contribute to successful communication and to what extent other factors predominate.

Types of complaints

The two complaints discussed above are both examples of discourse directed towards a particular person or towards people (i.e. to the second person), discourse which is a request for action. One of the generalizations that can be drawn is that the complainer has the longest turn regardless of usual culture-based rules. For instance, in the complaint routine a normally rather silent Vietnamese woman outtalks her male Burgher 'superior'. There is another type of complaint which can be described as a 'whinge'. As in the 'request for action', the complainer has the longest turn. But here the goal is not resolution but the opportunity to be listened to. Thus 'whinges' are between equals as well as between those with asymmetrical power relationships. No justification is required

in this type of complaint. One example is parallel discourse where a Ceylonese Burgher leading hand and a Maltese supervisor are 'whinging' independently, with one prompting the other's complaining:

cm: look i was wondering why we are conjuction
cm: that there's
db: now about that one

db: I told her she was keeping a bit of space and
db: putting it about oh [what's that

cm: gina
db: xxx know who i mean] gina and i came and
db: i said you will do the normal

db: that woman doesn't understand a word of
cm: who gina
db: english mm she doesn't

cm: why i wonder why i said to her looks
db: know [here
db: the xxx] to me nothing

db: bloody four seconds flat i finished the corner
cm: i say
cm: look spray a little bit on the

cm: corner of the trim ah + and send it to the heat
cm: know what she done she send
cm: it on to the heat without put any glue
db: she doesn't listen
cm: al all + of no you

cm: know why because i don't want conjuction
db: yeah
cm: there [that's why] i want the system

cm: running how it should be
db: and i said look im have
db: done about three bloody door trims

db: and i go on the [cutting] table and another one
db: is coming fucking hell it's not
db: hard for me just four seconds for me to do that
db: one like that wack wack wack

cm: even i said many times even one day said so my
cm: daughter is coming they get upset but we are not
cm: behind we are actually ahead
db: yeah now there be in

db: there extra [xxx]
cm: yeah but i want you after tea
cm: please we start doing those door trims because
cm: i've got the truck here ++ have a cup of coffee
db: ah okay

Small talk

Small talk is casual or phatic communication intended to establish empathy between individuals and thereby ease more goal-directed communication along (Malinowski 1949, Ventola 1979, Edmonson and House 1981, Schneider 1988). It includes openings and closings, tends to be disconnected and unimportant, informal and superficial, unfocused, and concerned with general, everyday things (Schneider 1988). In some cultures, work ethics make it not very acceptable for small talk to precede such speech acts which are necessary for essential work to proceed. This would appear to be the reason why work place communication between an Austrian shop steward and her Vietnamese offsiders ends in temporary non-communication or miscommunication. In the following extract, the Vietnamese woman KV shows her Austrian shop steward AA some broken parts:

aa: hallo Kim haven't seen you ++ what's
kv: hallo
aa: ↓ wrong +++ ooh they're ↑ breaking
kv: yeah see
kv: ++++ i beg your pardon what do you want

aa: I haven't seen you for a long time
kv: oh ↓yeah

The Vietnamese worker is both puzzled and frustrated by the lack of progress made in this conversation. She was expecting some advice or request for action but receives mainly phatic communication in terms of an indirect speech act. According to Nguyen Xuan Thu (personal communication), Vietnamese communication is concrete rather than abstract; questions are direct rather than indirect (i.e. not in the form of statements), specific rather than general The Vietnamese woman signals non-communication. The problem remains unresolved at the end of the exchange.

Further development of this project

For the remaining year of this project, we will continue to collect data ensuring that the inter-cultural dyads are alternated as much as possible for gender and status. In completing the analysis, we will endeavour to relate the management of communication and communication breakdown where appropriate to cultural value systems (See below, Section 6). We will attempt to describe this in a culturally neutral form.

We also hope to focus on differences between types of work-places. For instance, so far it appears that turn differences based on culture, gender and status are more pronounced on the factory floor than in other research sites. It is a contrast between a hierarchial structure, where power has at least apparently to be maintained, and a more habitual dyadic situation or stable network, where solidarity prevails over power.

Work is currently in progress on intercultural differences in the perception of different communication patterns and on attitudes towards them. The data is derived from videotaped reactions to videos of role-play based on our corpus.

It is our intention that this project be followed up by an investigation into successful and unsuccessful communication with

recently-arrived migrants in industry. Native English speaking supervisors and others with native-like command of English would be recorded interacting extensively in English with people whose English proficiency is very limited. This data would be gathered before and after a training course in inter-cultural communication to assess the effects of such training.

SOME CULTURAL DIFFERENCES: THE "EUROPEAN" / "ASIAN" DIVIDE

There was a consensus among the informants in discussions with the field workers that the sharp dividing line in communication patterns was between central and southern Europeans (and perhaps South Asians) on the one hand, and east and south-east Asians on the other. In fact, much work-place communication in Australia is currently between such dyads. Central and southern Europeans have generally been in Australia much longer than the 'Asian' interactants. They believe that their own patterns are closer to 'Anglo-Australian' ones and 'more correct'. Recalling the relative ease with which central and southern Europeans used to communicate without a common language other than English (The old commonality of 'foreignness' which marked boundaries with the dominant group, cf. Giles 1977, Tajfel and Turner 1979) the 'Europeans' often hold the 'Asians' responsible for communication breakdown. One Maltese foreman maintained that there was no trouble with English communication among his workers, but nevertheless complained that some of his 'Asian' workers don't obey him; "I ask them to do something, they say yes, and two hours later when I come back it's not done".

The Austrian leading hand commented that she used to get on so well with Greeks, Italians, and Yugoslavs 'but the Asians never seem to understand what I say how ever hard I try'. Part of this is due to differences in rules for small talk in central and southern European work communication on the one hand, and Vietnamese or Chinese work communication on the other (see example in 4.2). In videotapes of employee participation meetings,

men from South Asia excel in holding the floor. But some of them are far less successful in small talk on the factory floor which is very important in establishing solidarity networks.

The dyadic work-place communication has so far revealed a number of sharp contrasts:

(i) Long turns versus short turns, e.g. in complaints and apologies. 'Holding the floor' may, in itself, be a face-saving device but long complaints and apologies enable the speaker to achieve what is culturally necessary to 'do with words'. Not only do *Bs* produce shorter turns, they expect others, including *As* to do so.

(ii) The hidden implications in *A's* speech acts are understood by *As* rather than *Bs*.

(iii) *As* tend to apologize to *As* and to avoid apologizing to *Bs*.

(iv) *Bs* do not expect small talk to occur in work domain interaction (their own and 'others'), whereas *As* tend not to mark such 'mixing' of domain routines.

(v) Some but not all *As* tend to excel in formal discourse (including keeping turns) but not in small talk.

As tend to be central and southern Europeans, people from the Indian sub-continent, Latin Americans and Filipinos (most of all Croatians, Indians and Sri Lankans of different ethnic backgrounds, least Maltese). *Bs* tend to be eastern and south-east Asians (excluding Filipinos) (most of all Vietnamese, least Indonesians). Finns also fit into this group. The more *B*-ish a group, the more likely it is that *As* will experience non-communication with them. Miscommunication will occur within any dyads representing the two groups and, to a lesser extent, within groups *A* and *B*.

These contrasts require negotiation of meaning, or experience and training if communication breakdown and conflict are to be avoided. Negotiation generally results in repetition or

paraphrase. Repetition appears to be the normal means in our South Asian informants.

CULTURAL VALUES

So far I have suggested that particular speech acts are realized and interpreted in different ways by people from different cultural backgrounds and that speech act utterances are embedded in discourse segments which are governed by different patterns of turn exchange.

I would argue that this inter-cultural variation is determined by differences in cultural value systems. The details are based on progress results which may well need to be modified by new data in this project. This concurs with Gumperz's (1982: 162) notion of 'contextualization' - 'The identification of specific conversational exchanges as representative of socio-culturally familiar activities' through cues.

Hill *et al.* (1986) have developed the dichotomy 'discernment' (the almost automatic observation of social conventions) and 'volition' (the individual's decision whether to participate in verbal etiquette or not). This is related to the well-known cultural dichotomy individualistic vs. collectivist (See e.g. Smolicz 1979: 58-59). In this way variation can be explained in verbal behaviour motivated by politeness in interactions between collectivist Chinese or Vietnamese and, say, Finns or Germans who are generally regarded as individualistically oriented. Collective values in Chinese and Vietnamese entail a balance between harmony and authority, something that is reflected in pragmatic rules and discourse structures. In this connection I would like to refer to Hofsteede's (1980) contrastive analysis of cultures in a business context based on the categories *power distance* (elitist vs. pluralist), *uncertainty avoidance* (conformity, anxiety level), *individualism* , and *masculinity* (i.e. aggressiveness). According to Hofsteede, south-east Asians show low uncertainty avoidance and a high power distance indicator, but Germans, Austrians and Swiss combine high uncertainty avoidance with low

power distance while 'Yugoslavs' have a high uncertainty avoidance indicator as well as a high level of power distance. Italians and Latin Americans show a high level of both uncertainty avoidance and power distance. British, Americans, Australians, Dutch and Scandinavians combine a tendency towards 'feminine' behaviour with individualism and low levels of elitism and conformity.

While such broad categorizations need to be treated with caution, they can have some explanatory function when it comes to relating discourse phenomena, especially those connected with work ethics, to cultural value systems. At a completely different level, a tendency towards abstract style in written (especially academic) discourse (Clyne 1987) can be seen in terms of Galtung's (1985) classification of English-based intellectual style as 'more tolerant, more democratic, less elitist' than its German-based counterpart.

Many of these questions relate to 'politeness' which has been developed into the basis for a pragmatic theory by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). The main tenets of this model are the degree of relative power, social distance, and the ranking of impositions in a particular culture. While Brown and Levinson's principal concern is to establish a framework of universals, drawing on examples from English, Tamil, and the American Indian language Tzeltal, they show how strategies are employed on the basis of the three main sociological variables. Brown and Levinson distinguish between *negative politeness* which avoids conflicts through modesty, formality and restraint (i.e. not imposing), and *positive politeness* where people draw closer by showing appreciation of one another. However, the basic concepts on which Brown and Levinson rely, especially the notion of 'face', are shown by Wierzbicka (1985, 1989) and others, such as Tannen (1986), Matsumoto (1988), to have a strong anglocentric bias.

'The notion of *directness* (vs. indirectness) often employed in studies of cross-cultural or contrastive pragmatics is also found wanting by Wierzbicka (e.g. 1989) because they are 'applied to totally different phenomena, which are shaped by totally different

values' (1989: 30). So American culture is claimed to have more direct rules in comparisons with Japanese (e.g. Lebra 1986) but more indirect ones in comparisons with either Jewish or Black American culture (e.g. Schiffrin 1984, Kochman 1981 respectively). In contrast to the claims of universalists, the differences postulated by Wierzbicka are of a qualitative rather than a quantitative nature - she depicts them as a matter of cultural priorities. She represents as follows in terms of semantic primitives the Russian, Japanese and mainstream American emphases in the interpretation of 'good interpersonal relations':

1. 'warmth' of the kind associated with Russian culture
   I feel something good towards you
2. 'considerateness' and empathy as in Japanese culture
   I don't want someone to feel bad
3. general 'friendliness' as in mainstream American culture
   I want everyone to feel something good

Japanese use the bare imperative to show deference while Russians employ it with a particle to show politeness in contrast to the English tendency to substitute a question to avoid imposition. The question of rhythm of discourse is introduced by Wierzbicka (1989) when she distances from 'wanting' and 'not wanting' the Black and Jewish American tendency for speakers to overlap and interrupt, 'to share ... excitement, interest, and mutual involvement'. 'It is a difference between saying it at once and saying it at what one sees at an appropriate moment'. While we are not employing semantic primitives in our analysis, we *are* finding that the discourse differences in our corpus are based on different cultural values and not on mere variation in emphasis.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Language and social policies in Australia over the past two decades have increasingly recognized linguistic and cultural diversity in a positive way while still stressing the overarching position of the English language (See Section 1). But as I pointed out at the start

of this paper, the policy on the teaching of English as a Second Language to adults (though not the ideals of many of the teachers) still rests on some outdated assumptions. Our study is showing that non-English-speaking migrants need to be able to understand how non-English speakers of other cultural groups use the English language. It would also suggest that native English speakers need some training in inter-cultural communication - beyond the occasional ad hoc sensitivation workshops that very few have the opportunity to attend. This might be possible through an extension of the scope of the Adult Migrant Education Program, including its English in the Work Place section.

Inter-cultural communication breakdown has social and economic consequences for both labour and management since it can lead to interpersonal conflict, a decrease in work safety, and a drop in productivity. It contributes greatly to the billions of dollars lost in industry due to communication problems which is referred to in the recent discussion paper on literacy and language (Dawkins 1990). It can have the effect of preventing people from realizing their potential to the fullest and undermining the thrust toward industrial democracy.

The award restructuring under the National Wage Case decision of 12 August 1988 provides for upgrading of skills and ensuring that working patterns and arrangements 'enhance flexibility and the efficiency of the industry'. The third of the 'associated steps' in considering the award restructuring is 'to provide the means by which upward mobility occurs through education, training and service' (ACTU 1989). In the ensuing discussion, including award negotiating documents on specific industries, survival English as a second language has played a significance role, e.g.

> The company will grant all employees who are unable to adequately communicate in the English language, time off without loss of pay during normal working hours to attend courses...' (Metals/ TeleCom Federation)
>
> '..that all employees seeking competency in the English

> language will receive time off without loss of pay during normal working hours to attend agreed recognized courses'. (Health)
>
> 'A set of principles for negotiations have been adopted which include... Training in basic skills - numeracy, literacy and English language'. (Rail) (ACTU 1989)

Basic English as a second language is one of the areas in which arrangements are being made for companies (with a payroll of over $200,000 p.a. to fulfil their obligation to spend 1% of their income on upgrading the skills of employees under the Training Guarantee Act 1990, with the obligation rising to 1.5% from July 1992).

It is essential, for the reasons mentioned above, that the life and work chances of employees without adequate English be improved in this way. However, the research in progress, on which I have reported in this paper, demonstrates the importance of improving communication beyond the 'bare survival' level in the interests of a more harmonious, just and economically viable Australian society.

NOTES

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shop stewards, and union representatives.

2.

#	filled pause	<xx>	unrecognizable speech
+	unfilled pause	→ ←	acceleration, slowing down
.	glottal stop	↑ ↓	rising, falling intonation

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DEVELOPING PROFICIENCY SCALES FOR COMMUNICATIVE ASSESSMENT[1]

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ABSTRACT

This main aim of this paper is to examine the development and use of proficiency scales. The authors begin with a brief discussion of the notion of language proficiency, which leads into an overview of different types of proficiency scales. They narrow their focus to criteria, which are central to the notion of a proficiency scale, and give examples of how task- and performance-related criteria can be organized to facilitate the construction and use of scales. They then discuss other aspects of the process of constructing and trialling a scale, using as an example their development of the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings, and they outline different ways in which learners can be rated on different scales. Finally, a range of uses of scales in communicative language programmes is discussed, with particular reference to secondary schools.

PROFICIENCY

The concept of proficiency has been discussed at length elsewhere, especially in Ingram 1985. For present purposes, it is sufficient to say that, especially in papers on the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ASLPR), the present writers have defined proficiency as entailing notions both of the sorts of tasks that can be carried out in the language and the ways in which those tasks

are carried out, i.e. the sorts of language forms that occur. We distinguish between language proficiency and communicative competence, at least in the popularist sense of communicative competence as the ability to communicate, since this entails more than the ability to mobilize language forms and practical knowledge of how to carry out a language task (see Ingram 1985:226-227). It is also fundamental to the point of being trivial to distinguish between a learner's language proficiency and his or her ability to perform tasks (whether academic studies, vocational tasks, electioneering or seduction) where language is involved, but where it is only one of many factors that determine the outcome; one might assess whether the person's proficiency is high enough to meet the linguistic demands of the particular task, but clearly a favourable linguistic assessment will not guarantee that the person will succeed in the degree programme, win the election or seduce the target person.

SCALES

Amongst the two columns of definitions the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary provides for 'scale' are "an apparatus for weighing" and "a set or series of graduations...used for measuring distances etc". A proficiency scale selects certain criteria against which to 'weigh' learners' ability to use the language, criteria that can be 'graduated' so that particular learners' ability to use the language or some relevant aspect of their language can be matched against these graduations, or standards. Generally a number of intermediate points are selected between two end points so that a 'set or series' of graduated steps is provided. These graduated steps are assumed to reflect progression in mastery of the language or some aspect of it, so that the match indicates a learner's stage of development. In the case of proficiency scales such as the ASLPR, each graduated step consists of a description of the sorts of tasks that can be carried out in the language and of how they are carried out.

A variety of different types of proficiency or proficiency-

related scales may be distinguished according to how they are constructed, what they attempt to measure, and what criteria they contain. The following can serve as examples:

Whole vs. Part: A scale may relate to the whole span of proficiency development from zero ability to native-like ability, or to only a part of that developmental span. In the case of the ASLPR and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the span envisaged is from zero to native-like. Though it is difficult to arrive at an indisputable definition of 'native-like', it is assumed here to be that point where the learner's language behaviour is indistinguishable from that of a similarly educated first-language speaker of the same sociocultural variety.

Serial vs. Threshold: A scale may seek to provide a series of clearly defined steps or it may focus on a 'threshold' level, with only cursory (if any) descriptions of behaviour above and below this threshold. The threshold level is set in relation to the use to be made of the scale; for example, if it is to be used to decide whether a learner has enough proficiency to practise a certain vocation or to undertake a course of study, the threshold description will select criteria to describe the minimum proficiency required for those purposes and the assessment procedure has only to determine whether the learner's proficiency in terms of those criteria falls above, at, or below this threshold. This is generally a simpler procedure than providing a comprehensive, precise rating of the learner's proficiency.

General vs. Specific Purpose: A proficiency scale may seek to provide an assessment of learners' general proficiency (see Ingram 1985:223-224) or their ability to use the language for some specific purpose (e.g. civil engineering or nursing). The present versions of the ASLPR aim to assess general proficiency, but specific purpose versions are in preparation for use in assessing proficiency in designated areas. The IELTS provides measures of general proficiency in Listening and Speaking and, for some candidates, in Reading and Writing, and measures of specific purpose proficiency in three very broad areas of academic Reading and Writing (i.e. in English for Academic Purposes in the Life and

Medical Sciences, in the Arts and Social Sciences, and in the Physical Sciences and Technology).

Task-only vs. Total Behaviour: A scale may select as criteria the tasks that learners can carry out at graduated levels or it may attempt to select criteria that provide a more comprehensive picture of the learners' language behaviour. The ASLPR, Foreign Services Institute (FSI) Scale and The American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Guidelines attempt to do the latter, as do the IELTS Band Scales, though the IELTS descriptions are much less comprehensive. The problem with task-only scales is that a task may be carried out using a variety of language forms or none at all, and so a task-only assessment is not very informative in so far as the learner's use of the language is concerned.

General Proficiency vs. Graded Objectives: A scale may attempt to provide descriptions of learners' general proficiency at each of the graduated levels or it may adopt the sort of graded objectives approach popular in the late 1970s, whereby a graduated series of tasks were selected and their performance described using criteria considered relevant for consideration in the light of the course being taught. The graded objectives may be relevant to general proficiency but they need not be, especially if, as sometimes occurred in graded objectives courses, the course neglected the systematic development of the language and its creative use in favour of task achievement by, for instance, rote-memorization.

Macroskill-specific vs. Overall: Some scales seek to differentiate the four macroskills, as does the ASLPR, in the belief that different macroskills may differ in their direction and rate of development and in the criteria that should be observed when learners are being rated. Others (e.g. the IELTS Overall Band Scale) describe 'general language development', possibly in the sense in which Oller used the term 'general' in the 1970s or, in any case, to refer to some generalized language development irrespective of the features pertinent to any specific macroskill. (See Ingram 1985:224-225 for a brief discussion of unitary vs. macroskill- specific scales and of Oller's views; see Oller 1976,

amongst many others, for a discussion of his notion of 'general' proficiency.)

Absolute vs. Global: Some scales (e.g. the FSI Scale) describe themselves as 'absolute' in the sense that the standard of development stated for each criterion within a described level must be reached before a learner is assigned that particular level as his or her proficiency rating. In contrast, the approach to rating on the ASLPR is 'global'. The introductory paper to the ASLPR states:

It must be stressed that it is the observer's global assessment that is important and the definitions provided are not to be regarded as checklists. In this respect, the ASLPR differs from the FSI Scale. In the ASLPR, the definitions provide an overall picture of language behaviour at each level, and the learner is assigned to the one which his or her performance most closely resembles. This approach recognizes that language is highly complex, that it may develop at slightly different rates in different directions (e.g. syntax as against phonology, phonology as against discourse structuring, etc) and that, therefore, minor but compensating variations may occur within the total picture of the learner's behaviour. In some cases maverick development of a component skill (especially one that is strongly influenced culturally) may occur without significantly influencing the level at which the learner is assessed. (Ingram 1984a:9-10)

A global approach makes the assessment process more subjective, but any potential loss of reliability can be compensated for by other features of the rating procedure. The essential difference is that a global approach takes better account of the inherent complexity of the nature of language itself (see also Ingram 1985:222-223).

Analytic vs. Holistic: To some extent this contrast is similar to that between analytic and synthetic tests (see Ingram 1985:229) though the distinction is often not clear-cut in proficiency scales. Some scales set out to include quite specific statements about features (e.g. grammatical forms) that occur at each level, while others seek to make more generalized statements that, for instance in the case of syntactic development, describe the overall

appearance of sentences rather than specific syntactic items that emerge at a particular level. The ASLPR aims to provide generalized statements, but to assist in their interpretation by giving examples of the forms as well as the tasks that might be observed at a particular level. There is a potential problem with scales that make quite explicit statements about features of, for example, syntax, phonology or functions that occur at each level; the complexity of language may mean that a rating assigned using such criteria may be of little relevance to the learner's practical proficiency because of the complexity of language and the fact that (as outlined above) more or less development in one feature may be compensated for by less or more development in other features. In other words, as a measure of the development of syntax or some other specific feature of the language, such a rating may be accurate and useful for many purposes (not least for the diagnosis of specific strengths and weaknesses and for streaming into formal classes) but it may be of little use as a statement of practical proficiency.

CRITERIA

The contrasts that have just been made between different types of scales relate in many instances to the criteria that are included in the descriptors. As stated at the beginning of the section above, criteria are the essence of a proficiency scale.

The criteria-based system of assessment in Queensland secondary schools requires that the criteria used in making judgements be very 'up-front' in syllabuses and schools' work programs. This necessitates a very systematic approach to the use of criteria in scales. Sadler, the first leader of the Queensland Board of Secondary School Studies Assessment Unit, has suggested a schema for organizing a potentially very large number of performance-related criteria into a hierarchy, whereby very specific criteria which may or may not be relevant to all tasks can be subsumed under a workable number of more general criteria (Sadler 1986). Wylie has applied this principle to syllabuses for

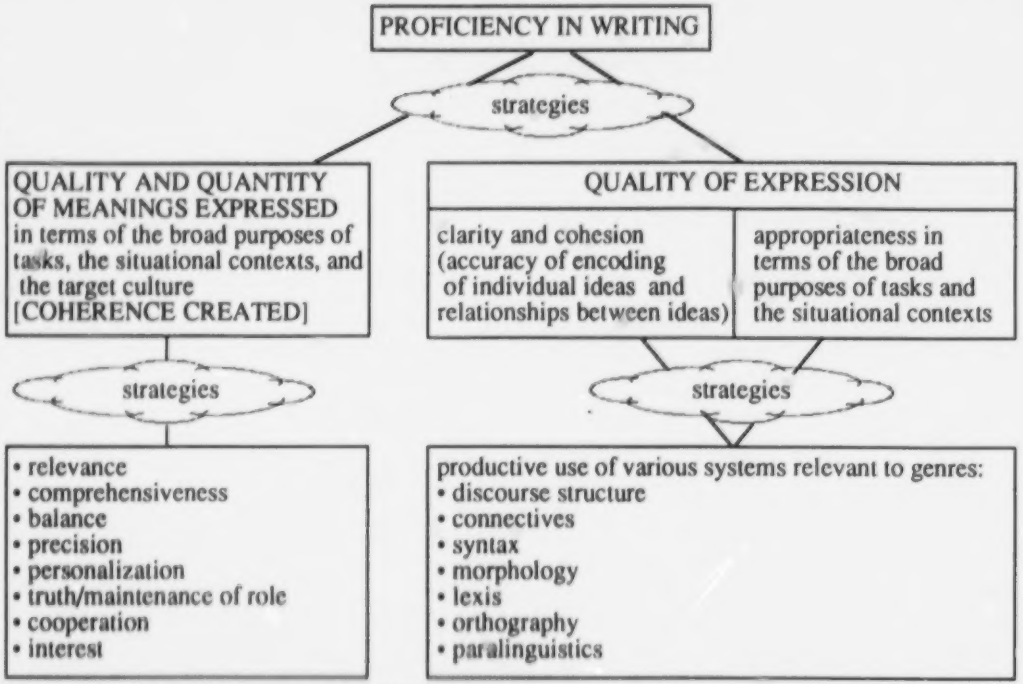
PROFICIENCY IN WRITING
strategies
QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF MEANINGS EXPRESSED in terms of the broad purposes of tasks, the situational contexts, and the target culture [COHERENCE CREATED]
QUALITY OF EXPRESSION
clarity and cohesion (accuracy of encoding of individual ideas and relationships between ideas)
appropriateness in terms of the broad purposes of tasks and the situational contexts
strategies
strategies
• relevance
• comprehensiveness
• balance
• precision
• personalization
• truth/maintenance of role
• cooperation
• interest
productive use of various systems relevant to genres:
• discourse structure
• connectives
• syntax
• morphology
• lexis
• orthography
• paralinguistics

Figure 1: Criteria for assessing Writing

languages other than English (LOTEs), with the aim of establishing a 'working level' in the hierarchy for each macroskill which would be both comprehensive and universally relevant, and which would, therefore, provide an important part of the framework for the achievement scale for that macroskill. The resulting schemata are slightly more complex than Sadler's.

The schema for Writing, shown in Figure 1 below, and the Speaking schema, which is very similar, have an initial dual focus at the working level on the traditional areas of content and form, the 'what' and the 'how'. The separate identification of these should not be taken to suggest that there should be any compartmentalization of approach in assessment activities. This would, in fact, be futile to attempt; ideas cannot be expressed except through some symbolic forms such as language, and language forms unrelated to ideas are not communication. It is possible, however, to focus on, and make separate judgements about each, just as, for example, it is possible to make separate judgements about a learner's Speaking and Listening in a conversation, a task which involves both macroskills.

A perusal of the scale devised by Wylie for Speaking for Senior Italian, which is provided in the appendix to this paper, will show how the working level (the middle level in the model) of the schema is used as a basis for the scale. (The schema for Speaking, it should be noted, has an extra criterion, 'fluency', under QUALITY OF EXPRESSION at the working level.)

The schema for Listening is shown below in Figure 2. The tripartite division at the working level in this schema (and in the Reading schema) has links with traditional models of language proposed by Jakobson and Buhler (see Jakobson 1960:352-7).

Problems in moderation in the early days of Queensland's school-based assessment system stemmed largely from a lack of appropriate task specifications in syllabuses and work programmes and a lack of precise statements in samples of students' work submitted to review panels about the conditions under which tasks were performed. To obtain an acceptable degree of comparability between ratings, the performance-related criteria discussed above

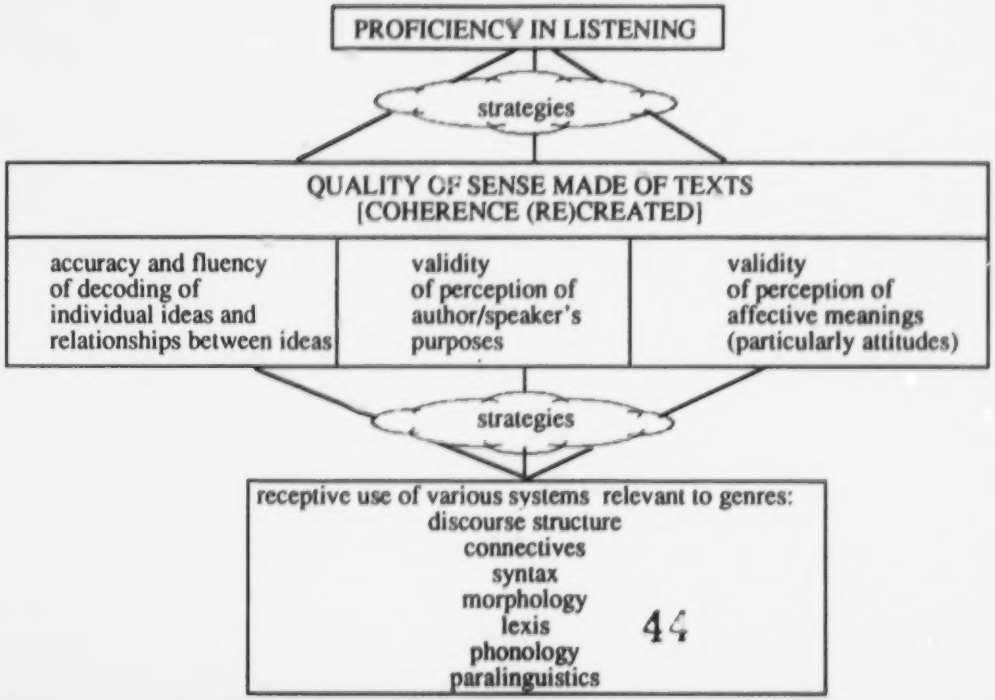

Figure 2: Criteria for assessing Listening

must be complemented by another set of criteria, those related to the difficulty of the task performed. These can be classified into two types - those which relate to the inherent difficulty of the task, and those which relate to assistance provided for the learner in performing the task. For example, with tasks for Writing, Wylie has suggested the following:-

INHERENT DIFFICULTY OF TASK	HELP PROVIDED WITH TASK
. complexity and precision of individual meanings . discourse structuring required (e.g. number and types of links) . amount of extra-linguistic processing required . novelty of purpose(s), genre, context, meanings and forms (for idiosyncratic or cultural reasons)	. amount of rehearsal by the student of the actual task, similar tasks, or parts of the task . provision of dictionaries and other reference material . provision of contextual material (e.g. the stimulus text in the target language)

Table 1: Task-related criteria (Writing)

CONSTRUCTING PROFICIENCY SCALES

The type of scale chosen and the nature of the criteria to be included in it determine to some extent how one will go about constructing a scale. If the scale is to be highly analytic and to itemize, for example, syntactic forms, then one can identify, either from developmental psycholinguistics or by testing, exactly what syntactic forms appear in the behaviour of learners at the designated levels.

The FSI, ASLPR and IELTS Scales and the ACTFL Guidelines represent a different approach (though their developers would claim to have taken account of the literature of developmental psycholinguistics, at least to the extent of seeking

to ensure that the broad descriptive statements were compatible with what was known from the more analytic item-related studies). The developers of scales such as the ASLPR seek to capture the intuitions that native speakers have about their language and its development, make these intuitions concrete and suited to the purpose by using descriptions of the language features that are observable, and then trial them and flesh them out by actual observations of the performance of a number of learners at different developmental stages. There is usually a process of 'distillation' of the data gathered during these observations, in order to make descriptors which are usable in the circumstances in which the judgements are to be made; for example, the criteria nominated at a particular level may be restricted to those considered to be the most potent discriminators around that level.

As described in Ingram 1984a:7, the starting-point for the ASLPR, for a number of reasons, was the FSI Scale. Drawing on the FSI Scale enabled a great deal of experience and experiment in describing proficiency and its development to be added to that of the researchers working on the ASLPR. As the early, more or less intuition-based scale was written, it was subjected to extensive trialling, whereby the researchers interviewed and rated large numbers of learners at all proficiency levels in order to check the consistency and coherence of the descriptors and to elaborate them. In other words, the partly intuitive descriptors were tried out with real-life learners and were evaluated and elaborated empirically. Formal trials were subsequently held in Australia, China and the United States to determine the validity and reliability of the scale when used with adult and adolescent learners of ESL and of three other languages. This formal trialling essentially assumed that, if the series of descriptors making up the scale really did reflect language development, if they described features of the language that generally did co-occur, and if they were comprehensible and manageable, then teachers trained to use them could interpret them consistently, and apply them reliably. The formal trialling process of the adult ESL version is reported in full in Ingram 1984b, and the results are summarized in Ingram 1984a.

The developmental process described has, in fact, continued over the years as other research projects have been undertaken and as the scale has been used in practice. A similar approach has been commenced with the IELTS Band Scales though, to date, they have not gone beyond the intuitive stage of drawing on experience, insights, and other scales in order to arrive at descriptors. It is vital that, in the immediate future, the IELTS scales be tried out with large numbers of learners of different types and from different environments, that the descriptors be reviewed and re-written in the light of such processes, and that formal trialling then be undertaken.

It should be noted that there may sometimes be a case for deviating from a purely empirical approach, for describing not what has actually been observed, but what is deemed to be desirable. In the 1987 Queensland Senior Italian syllabus there is a greater (or at least more explicitly stated) emphasis on spontaneous language use than in previous syllabuses. To accommodate this, there is a relaxation in the standards expected in certain other criteria in the Achievement Scale; for example, students exiting from Year 12 with High Achievement in Speaking under this new syllabus may display less mastery of certain features of register than students exiting under the previous syllabus (see the 'Appropriateness' paragraph in the description of High Achievement in Speaking in the appendix). Experienced teachers consulted agreed that there should be a beneficial backwash effect from this 'readjustment'.

RATING OR ASSIGNING LEVELS TO LEARNERS

There are a number of different ways in which learners may have their proficiency rated:-

Analytic Matching: With scales that are relatively analytic, or where there is an expectation that specific features in the language (e.g. syntactic forms) can be correlated with particular proficiency levels, it may be possible to use indirect and semi-direct test types to relate learners objectively to the scale. However,

a rating based solely on formal knowledge of particular syntactic items, and not backed up by observation of the learner's ability to use those items for actual communicative purposes, may not accurately reflect the learner's practical proficiency. The comments above about the complexity and compensatory nature of language proficiency should also be noted.

Interpreting Indirect and Semi-direct Test Scores: With direct methods of proficiency assessment, language behaviour is elicited, observed and matched directly against a scale. When indirect and semi-direct test types are used, ratings may be assigned by correlating scores on the tests with the scale levels. The ASLPR uses only direct testing. The IELTS uses direct means for Speaking and Writing, but indirect and semi-direct means for Listening and Reading, and in the view of the present writers, problems in the re-interpretation of scores in terms of band scales have not been satisfactorily resolved.

Checklist: A 'checklist' approach to criteria and standards may be used. In the strong form of this approach, the learner is deemed to have reached a particular level only if all of the standards stated for that level are checked off (when observed in a formal interview or in real life). In other cases, only the standards for certain, more highly valued criteria must be observed. The strong checklist approach was originally used with the FSI Scale, though it appears that this has been modified in certain assessment situations for the reasons indicated earlier in implied criticism of the checklist approach (John Clark, personal communication, 1981).

Non-structured Observation: Learners may be observed engaging in language activities over a period of time, and rated directly against a scale. Though this would seem to provide a highly practical measure of the learners' proficiency, it may not be a true measure since, for example, the rater may not have observed the learners in situations that fully extend their ability to use the language. In addition, where such ratings are made by a teacher on the basis of classroom observation, they may be distorted by other factors such as the learners' formal knowledge

of the language, which is often the focus of class activity, or their general demeanour in class.

Structured Interview: To overcome the last problem, scales such as the ASLPR use a structured interview to elicit the learner's maximum language behaviour, which is then rated against the scale. (The term 'interview' is used broadly here, to include the Writing test, since essentially the same principles apply.) In the case of the ASLPR, the interview is described in broad stages, allowing the interviewer the flexibility to vary procedures for certain purposes so long as the learner's maximum language behaviour is elicited. In the case of the IELTS Speaking test, the interview is more controlled, in order to try to maximize reliability in situations where the interviewers are relatively untrained. However, the same purpose applies in this as in the freer interview type; that is, to elicit the learner's maximum language behaviour in order to match it against the scale descriptors.

Criteria Sub-scales: With the IELTS Writing test, there are criterion sub-scales, which are differentially weighted. The examiner rates the candidate on each of the sub-scales, and then reduces these ratings to a single rating on the single Writing Band Scale. There are problems inherent in such an approach, for example, in resolving the weightings assigned to the various sub-scales. It has also yet to be shown that this approach is any more valid and reliable than the use of the single band scale, which would seem to be simpler, less time consuming, and no more prone to (or at least with fewer opportunities for) impressionistic judgements.

Self-rating: This is a variation of the non-structured observation discussed above, but without many of the problems inherent in the non-structured observation of another person's language behaviour. Wylie has developed several simplified versions of the ASLPR for different types of learners to assess their own proficiency, including a version for the National Languages Institute of Australia database (see Wylie and Ingram 1991). Self-assessment has great practical advantages over testing mechanisms such as those described above, and limited trialling suggests a high

degree of accuracy of learners' own perceptions of their proficiency, though clearly it could not be relied on utterly when a person could be tempted to inflate or deflate his or her ratings for some personal gain.

PROFICIENCY SCALES IN COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES

In communicative language programmes, proficiency scales like the ASLPR and ACTFL can serve a variety of purposes, including but extending well beyond the assessment of individual learners. The authors have written extensively on the subject (e.g. Ingram 1985) and here only some key areas will be selected for discussion.

First, to the extent that different classes in a programme are formed on the basis of proficiency, proficiency scales may assist in streaming. However, in principle, it is desirable to take other factors into account besides proficiency since, in streaming, one is generally interested in trying to produce homogeneous learning groups and many other factors besides proficiency determine this (including, inter alia, age, motivation, aims, aptitude, attitudes, and preferred learning strategies).

Second, proficiency scales may be used in formative and summative assessment. In formative assessment, a scale can be useful for assessing whether the learner is 'on track', i.e. making the expected progress towards the practical and functional skills that the course aims to develop. A scale may help the teacher to judge the suitability of test types and test items to the learners' stage of development. It should be noted, however, that an important aspect of formative assessment is the progressive assessment of specific objectives (that is, the teacher needs to find out whether the particular elements of the language he or she is teaching are being internalized by the learner) and more analytic, indirect and semi-direct tests will generally be more useful for this purpose.

For summative purposes in a course aimed at developing practical language skills, a proficiency scale is very useful in that

it provides a measure of the learners' practical proficiency. However, it has to be stressed that proficiency changes slowly and there is little point in using a proficiency scale and the associated test procedures at frequent intervals. In general, they could not be advocated at more frequent intervals than about 250 hours, i.e. at the beginning and main exit points in the usual secondary school LOTE class or at the start and finish of a full-time ten-week ESL module for overseas students.

In this context, it is useful to distinguish course attainment from general proficiency. While the community and the education systems which serve it necessarily assume that learners will be able to generalize what they learn in class to other situations and other purposes, in school assessment the teacher is often interested only in the extent to which the learners are learning what he or she is teaching. Thus, the language teacher is interested in the learners' attainment on the particular course being taught, while other interested parties, e.g. prospective employers, are more likely to be interested in the extent to which the learners can use the language for practical purposes, i.e. their general proficiency. Ideally, therefore, at the end of a course (especially if one wishes to evaluate the success of the course itself), one would provide both a course-related achievement test using items relevant to what was taught, and a test of general proficiency using a proficiency rating scale.

Wylie's proposed scales for Senior Italian in Queensland are first and foremost achievement scales but, in keeping with the aims of the course, there is a strong element of general proficiency, particularly at Very High and High Achievement Levels, with references to "novel tasks" and "unrehearsed meanings" (see appendix).

Outside the area of assessment of individual students, because proficiency scales trace the development of learners' language, they can make significant contributions to programme planning. They allow entry levels for particular courses to be clearly specified, and they provide a firm basis on which to set long-term goals and objectives.

One of the most important potential uses of proficiency scales is to enable more adequate information on learners' rates of progress through particular types of courses in particular target languages to be accumulated. At present, little firm information is available on how rapidly different learners with different educational and other backgrounds and in different types of courses move from one proficiency level to another. If such information were available (for example, in the form of a computer database into which have been entered students' proficiency levels at entry to, and exit from, courses, along with relevant characteristics of the students and the courses) it would enable courses to be planned on a more informed basis and would reduce the unrealistic expectations that many people (not least finance managers, politicians, other administrators, parents, and often teachers) have of what proficiency changes can be achieved in any particular course. For example, it might lead the Federal Government to realize the futility of urging that tertiary students be encouraged to develop proficiency in a language other than English while undertaking degree courses such as Business Studies, while it remains unwilling to fund four-year degree programmes.

In the area of syllabus design, scales like the ASLPR focus attention on practical language skills, thus encouraging teachers to re-think what they are about in teaching the target language. For instance, because of proficiency scales' focus on practical ability to use the language rather than on formal knowledge about the language, their introduction may have a highly beneficial washback effect on teaching. This was, in fact, a major consideration in designing the IELTS.

Proficiency scales show the probable path of development of any learner; thus, for example, if a learner is at 1+ on the ASLPR, the scale shows that a major pattern of change in the ensuing period will be the complexification of the language, stimulated as the learner tries to express him or herself in the course of social interaction. It would seem probable that, if courses were designed to take into account the natural developmental trends

(especially the major parameters of change identified in the scale), then learning would be made most effective.

Nevertheless, it has to be stressed that a proficiency scale is not a syllabus. It provides a developmental description of proficiency, it identifies a series of key parameters of change as proficiency develops, and it contains a series of static descriptions of language behaviour at various points, but it is not itself a syllabus. There is a fundamental, logical difference between a proficiency level and how a learner reaches that proficiency level; learners at ASLPR Level 1, for instance, could not attain Level 2 simply by memorizing examples of Level 2 language behaviour. In brief, a proficiency scale is not a syllabus but, in that it provides a means of specifying entry levels and goals and objectives, and in that it reflects paths of development, it provides an overarching framework within which syllabuses and courses can be designed. In addition, the clear specification of proficiency levels allows series of courses to be made more coherent, facilitates the movement of learners between courses, and provides a means of assessing the suitability of activities and materials to the learners' stage of development.

An approach to syllabus design for English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) developed by Wylie aims to maximize learning by keying into developmental levels. The genre (or text-type) is the main unit of organization for classes designated Level 1 and above. At each level of the ASLPR there are references to particular genres which the learner can use to some degree. For learners who are (say) at Level 1, it is appropriate to focus on genres which are identified or implied at 1+, since 1+ language behaviour is the goal for these learners. The table below shows some of the genres which are suggested for general English courses for various levels.

It may be useful at this point to recall the distinction made in a previous section between proficiency and communicative competence. If one sees communicative methods leading to the development of communicative competence in the loose sense of the ability to communicate, then a proficiency scale does not meas-

GENRE \ LEVEL	1	1+	2	2+	3
anecdote	very simple or simplified	simple	simple	standard	complex
editorial			simplified on familiar topic	very simple on familiar topic	simple on familiar topic
feature article in magazine or newspaper	very simple or simplified	simple	standard	standard	complex
interactional conversation	very simple f to f	simple f to f; very simple on phone	f to f; simple on phone	standard	complex
news item on radio	very simple or simplified	simple	moderately simple	standard, including actuality	complex, including actuality

Table 2: Genres as organizational units in a developmental approach to ESL syllabus design.

ure this ability; there are many other factors that intervene (e.g. the learner's intelligence and education, knowledge of the field to be discussed, ability to systematize knowledge and see and express logical relationships; the learner's personality and relationship with the other participant in the interaction; and the latter's willingness to accommodate less than native-like language forms). Indeed, granted the number and variety of factors other than language that determine the ability to communicate (including factors related to the interlocutor rather than to the learner) it is questionable whether language teachers should attempt to test or develop tests to assess communicative competence. If, however, a teacher were to aspire to do so, then scales that seek to include the additional factors that comprise communicative competence would be required, scales quite different from proficiency scales. In brief, it is entirely appropriate that language courses seek to develop the ability to communicate, but it is probable that adequate tests of this ability cannot be developed and, because, to be complete, they would have to make statements about an interlocutor whose characteristics are irrelevant to the learner, they are not appropriate to language testing. Rather, teachers should seek to assess a learner's ability to use the language in carrying out communication tasks, i.e. they should seek to measure proficiency.

APPLICATION OF PROFICIENCY SCALES TO SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

In considering the use of proficiency scales in communicative assessment in Australian secondary schools, one must ask what sorts of scales may be appropriate and how proficiency ratings might be translated into the sort of school grades traditionally provided in internal and external assessment procedures in the various education systems.

Courses might use one of the published proficiency scales against which to assess students. One advantage of this is that the instruments have already been extensively trialled; another is that the instruments are widely known and therefore facilitate

comparison of student proficiency levels irrespective of the course followed and the education system experienced. There are, however, some disadvantages. Proficiency changes slowly, very few proficiency scales provide more than the 12 levels provided on the ASLPR, and there is little practical point in their providing more, any added differentiation being of little practical value for general purposes and increasing the risk of unreliability as the number of levels increases. Consequently, though it would seem desirable for results on a course to be interpretable in relation to one of the major proficiency scales, these scales may be considered to be too blunt for school use and to be demotivating when, for instance, the students' entry level to the course in Speaking is said to be 1 and the exit level after two years in Years 11 and 12 is said to be 1+ or 2. This may have the effect of bringing home to administrators the unintensive and therefore inefficient nature of the usual Secondary School course, but the effect on learners is still demotivating. In addition, the ways in which proficiency scales name levels are not usually compatible with the ways in which education systems report results. Solutions to these problems can be found.

First, courses might, like the Queensland Secondary School language syllabuses, be accompanied by their own proficiency scales. Such scales may well be more like 'graded objectives' scales related closely to the course and so reflect attainment on the course. However, they need not be unrelated to notions of general proficiency or unrelated to one of the published general proficiency scales. Indeed, courses should generally be so designed that they develop general proficiency at the same time as they specify the language content of the course reasonably precisely in terms of situations, functions, tasks, language forms and so on and this would enable quite precise and course-related scales to be provided. If the course design and scales are compatible with a general proficiency scale, then the results would be interpretable against the general scale and, for practical purposes beyond the school system, the course and the assessment can then provide information concerning the practical skills developed.

A decision may be made to use a scale which is quite course-specific and which does not lend itself to interpretation in terms of any major published proficiency scale. The language behaviour of students performing at levels A, B, C, D or E (or whatever grades are used) may be spelt out using quite specific criteria. This is probably most easily done in courses that adopt a graded objectives approach and are quite specific in their content. Nevertheless, the problem of differentiation between the descriptors is often acute.

Another approach using a general proficiency scale such as the ASLPR is to specify the proficiency goal to be sought in the course and then to rate students at, above or below this level of attainment in whatever way is adopted in the education system in question. Thus, for instance, if the education system uses grades such as Distinction, Credit, Pass, Pass Minus, and Fail and if the goal for the average student is set as S:1+, L:1+, W:1+, R:1+, then students performing above the 1+ level would be graded at Distinction or Credit, and below at Pass Minus or Fail. This is elaborated in Table 3.

GRADE	PROFICIENCY				NOTES
	S	L	R	W	
D	>2	>2	>2	>2	All four macroskills >2
C	2	2	2	2	Two or more macroskills 2, others 1+
P	1+	1+	1+	1+	All four macroskills 1+
P-	1	1	1	1	One or more macroskill 1
F	<1	<1	<1	<1	Two or more macroskills <1
					Variations below the number of macroskills at a particular level must be compensated for by an equal number above or the level below assigned.

Table 3: Proficiency profiles converted to school grades.

CONCLUSION

A common theme of this paper has been the relationship between the purpose for which assessment is to be carried out and the types of assessment instruments which are appropriate to that purpose. In conclusion, it must be stressed that, for any assessment, the way to start is by clarifying the purpose. Only when one is clear about why one is assessing is it possible to make an informed decision about the most appropriate means of assessment, which may or may not involve a proficiency scale.

NOTES

1. This is an abridged version of a paper of the same title presented at the National Assessment Consultation for the National Assessment Framework for Languages at Senior Secondary Level, (NAFLaSSL), Sydney, 5 December, 1989.
2. a: 'Coherence' refers to "connectivity of underlying content", the way the ideas and the relationships between ideas in the 'text world' match those of the real world of the listener or reader; 'cohesion' refers to "connectivity of the surface" (see de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981:13,71).
   b: Strategies are not elaborated. This is not meant to suggest that they are unimportant, but the model is concerned more with product than process, and successful strategies are often not observable.

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APPENDIX
YEAR 12 ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS IN SPEAKING (ITALIAN)

N.B. This is a slightly later version than that in the 1987 syllabus. Differences are minimal.

VERY HIGH ACHIEVEMENT

TASKS:

The student performs a variety of tasks of the complexity of an extended face-to-face conversation on everyday topics, or a talk to a specified audience on a topic of personal relevance. Registers, genres and task-types are familiar, but actual tasks are novel, with a high proportion of unrehearsed meanings. (A few minutes would be given for orientation to the situation if roleplay is involved, or for organising ideas for a monologue.)

OVERALL PERFORMANCE:

The student performs such tasks well (though performance is far from native-like). Across the tasks, a wide repertoire of language functions and forms, including past, present and future tenses, is displayed, and there is a wide variety of sentence types, including some unrehearsed complex sentences.

MEANINGS EXPRESSED:

The points essential to the task are included, and what is said is relevant and of interest to the audience. The student often goes beyond learned stereotypes to express personal perceptions, opinions and emotions, although these are substantiated or refined to only a limited degree.

CLARITY AND COHESION:

A monolingual Italian listener would only occasionally need to

make a special effort to understand what the student is saying or to request repetition or rewording. There is some interference from the first language in pronunciation. Links between clauses and sentences are marked by a range of simple connectors. Most inflections are correct.

FLUENCY:

Hesitations and circumlocutions slow down the overall rate of communication, but are not generally distracting to listeners.

APPROPRIATENESS:

Common idioms are used, and these and other expressions are appropriate in terms of formality. When the role relationships in the situation are clear-cut, the student chooses and generally sustains the appropriate second person forms.

HIGH ACHIEVEMENT

TASKS:

The student performs a variety of tasks such as those described above under VERY HIGH

ACHIEVEMENT.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE:

The student performs such tasks reasonably well. Across the tasks, a wide repertoire of language functions and forms, including past, present and future tenses, is displayed, and there is a variety of sentence types, including some unrehearsed complex sentences.

MEANINGS EXPRESSED:

The points essential to the task are included. However, some of the things talked about, particularly in a monologue, are likely to

be of little relevance or little interest to the audience. The students sometimes goes beyond learned stereotypes to express personal perceptions, opinions and emotions, but these are substantial or refined to only a very limited degree.

CLARITY AND COHESION:

A monolingual Italian listener would understand everything in a conversation after some repetition or rewording; in a monologue there would be some ambiguity. There is interference from the first language in pronunciation. Links between sentence and clauses are marked by simple, very familiar connectors. Most of the common inflections are correct, but there are frequent errors in less familiar forms.

FLUENCY:

Frequent hesitations and circumlocutions significantly slow down the overall rate of communication, and sometimes distract listeners.

APPROPRIATENESS:

Very familiar idioms are used, but these and other expressions are sometimes inappropriate in terms of formality. When the role relationships in the situation are clear-cut, the student chooses the appropriate second person forms, but does not always sustain these throughout the task, particularly with pronoun objects and possessive.

SOUND ACHIEVEMENT

TASKS:

The student performs a variety of tasks of the complexity of a simple face-to-face conversation on everyday topics, or a short talk

to a specified audience on a topic of personal relevance. Registers, genres and task-types are familiar, but actual tasks and partly novel, with some of the meanings unrehearsed. (A few minutes would be given for orientation to the situation if roleplay is involved, or for organising ideas for a monologue).

OVERALL PERFORMANCE:

The student preforms such tasks reasonably well. Across the tasks, a basic repertoire of language functions and forms is displayed. There is some variety of sentence types, though unrehearsed complex sentences are rare.

MEANINGS EXPRESSED:

The points essential to the task are included. However, some of the things talked about, particularly in a monologue, are likely to be of little relevance or little interest to the audience. The student expresses opinions or emotions only through learned phrases.

CLARITY AND COHESION:

A monolingual Italian listener would understand all or very nearly all of the rehearsed meanings, but would miss some of the novel utterances, even after repetition or rewording. There is strong interference from the first language in pronunciation. Links between clauses and sentences are marked by only the most familiar simple connectors, eg. e, ma, o, poi. Inflections are often wrong.

FLUENCY:

In unrehearsed utterances, frequent long hesitations and attempts to overcome repertoire gaps by circumlocution greatly slow down the overall rate of communication and often distract listeners.

APPROPRIATENESS:

Only the most familiar idioms are used, and these and other expressions are sometimes inappropriate in terms of formality. Even in apparently clear-cut situations the student may not choose the appropriate second person forms. If the appropriate forms have been chosen, they are not sustained throughout the task.

LIMITED ACHIEVEMENT

TASKS:

The student performs a variety of tasks such as those described above under SOUND

ACHIEVEMENT.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE:

Across the tasks, a restricted repertoire of language functions and forms is displayed. There is no ability to circumlocute, and the student may frequently resort to English words. Unrehearsed sentences consist of no more than subject, verb, and noun phrase or other simple complement. The student demonstrates very little ability to modify or recombine learned elements effectively.

MEANINGS EXPRESSED:

Only some of the points essential to tasks are included, and things talked about, particularly in a monologue, are likely to be of little relevance or little interest to the audience.

CLARITY AND COHESION:

A monolingual Italian listener would understand some of the rehearsed meanings but would miss a high proportion of the novel

utterances, even after a lot of repetition. Sentences are essentially unlinked. Only the most familiar inflections are correct, and in less familiar words there may be no attempt to inflect.

FLUENCY:

In unrehearsed utterance there are frequent, very long hesitations.

VERY LIMITED ACHIEVEMENT

TASKS:

The student performs a restricted range of tasks. These are either tasks of the complexity of those described above under SOUND ACHIEVEMENT which are very familiar, having been very recently rehearsed, or very simple tasks relating to the student's immediate circumstances, eg. stating the number and age of members of the family.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE:

Across the tasks, a very restricted repertoire of language functions and forms is displayed. The student demonstrates no ability to modify or recombine learned elements effectively.

CLARITY:

A monolingual Italian would understand only the most rehearsed utterances.

RAPID PROFILE: A SECOND LANGUAGE SCREENING PROCEDURE

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ABSTRACT

Rapid Profile, developed by Manfred Pienemann of NLIA/LARC, is a computer-based procedure for screening speech samples collected from language learners in order to assess their level of language development as compared to standard patterns in the acquisition of the target language. This paper introduces Rapid Profile and provides a user guide for the Rapid Profile software.

RAPID PROFILE - OVERVIEW

Rapid Profile is a procedure for screening speech samples collected from language learners in order to assess their level of language development as compared to standard patterns in the acquisition of the target language.

Our procedure is based on detailed studies of English and German as second languages. These studies have established standard patterns in the acquisition process which can be used as fixed reference points for the assessment of a learner's level of language development.

Since classroom experiments show convincingly that the effectiveness of teaching intervention is constrained by what the learner is ready to learn, the practical use of profile analysis can have far-reaching positive consequences. By using it, the teacher can determine where the learner is in his/her acquisition process, which elements of the target language can be learnt next, and

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whether there are any developmental gaps in the learner's language.

Consequently the teacher can build the syllabus around what is known about patterns of acquisition and use his/her profiling skills to monitor the learner's actual progress in the acquisition process.

Rapid Profile was developed from standard Profile Analysis (Fletcher, Garman & Crystal 1976) which is based on an interview, a full transcription of the interview and a detailed analysis of the transcript. This procedure yields very precise results but it appears to be practical only in a situation where much time can be spent with one learner.

LARC's approach is a shorthand version of the original procedure. It too involves spontaneous speech data, which, however, is not a free conversation, and does not need to be transcribed. Instead, the learner participates in communicative tasks which trigger the production of grammatical structures which are crucial to determining the student's developmental stage. These structures are recorded by the analyst by clicking in boxes on the computer screen. The tester does not need to analyse these data, only to listen for them and record them. Another feature which adds to the speed of our procedure is that the sample is analysed "on-line", i.e. while the learner speaks. This on-line analysis is carried out using a computer program containing an expert system which is able to objectively interpret the observations entered into the program in terms of developmental level; the program can provide such interpretations as feed-back to the analyst while the assessment is carried out. This allows the analyst to adjust the selection of elicitation tasks to the current state of the assessment. Different tasks were designed by LARC to elicit structures indicative of different developmental stages.

These features - backed by a thorough training - condense the procedure to approximately minutes per informant.

The communicative tasks and the computer program form a package which functions as an assessment/diagnosis tool. We

named this package Rapid Profile because of the time-constrained approach we have taken to profile analysis.

To achieve a speedy analysis at a satisfactory level of accuracy, a sound training is needed. For this purpose LARC created a new training environment, named RapPro Trainer, which uses the same observation interface as the actual Rapid Profile procedure. The added features are based on a compact disc containing high quality recordings of learner speech. RapPro Trainer is able to control the CD and can identify every single grammatical structure in the learner data which is relevant to the Rapid Profile observation procedure. This ability is the basis for a wide range of interactive training modes from which the RapPro trainee can choose.

Thus RapPro Trainer is adaptable to the individual needs of the trainee. It evaluates the training session and can pinpoint areas which need further attention. RapPro Trainer is an interactive training tool which can be used in a self-learning mode.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.

Rapid Profile is a second language screening procedure which allows the analyst to assess a learner's level of development against standard patterns in the acquisition of the target language. The procedure is based on a sample of natural conversational speech of the learner which is rapidly analysed with the help of a computer program.

The reference point of such a screening procedure is, of course, the invariant line of development found in second language acquisition. A wide range of empirical studies has shown conclusively that learners pass through invariable stages of development as they reconstruct for themselves the target language. These studies established the standard patterns in the acquisition process which form the basis of this screening procedure.

Table 1 lists 25 structures and the order in which these are

Stage	Syntax		Morphology	+	>	—
6	Cancel Inversion	I wonder where he is I wonder what he wants to eat				
5	D)-2nd Aux-2nd Neg-do2nd	why did she eat that? where have you lsot it? why didn't you tell me?	3sg-s Adv-ly	he eats run slowly	he is eats run fastly	he eat run slow
4	y/n inversion Copula inversion Particle shift	have you seen him Is she at home? where is she? turn it off	obj-case poss-pro past-ed Irr. past -ing plural-s poss.-s	...called him their garden she play-ed she came going 2 cat-s Pat's cat	she go Peter's his go-ed now came wenting a cats he saw Pat's	he saw she they food V+Ø two cat Pat cat
3	Topicalization Do-fronting Adverb-fronting Neg.+Verb	cheese I like do he live here? today he stay here				
2.	Neg.+SVO SVO SVO	no me live here me live here you live here?				
1	Single words Formulæ	how are you?-where is X?-hello-Five Dock-Central				

Table 1 ESL Acqusition

acquired by second language learners of English. These findings are based on research by Pienemann and Johnston (1987), Pienemann, Johnston and Brindley (1988) and Pienemann (1991). The structures listed in Table 1 are explained by the examples which are given for each structure.

The acquisition patterns described in Table 1 are not incidental. It has been shown that they reflect a hierarchy of processing complexity. In other words it has been shown that the developmental schedule of these and other structures can be predicted on the basis of the complexity of the learning task. The learner gradually develops processing skills such as word retrieval, use of grammatical information, etc. and learns to use these skills under the enormous time constraints imposed on spontaneous speech. It is the gradual growth of these skills which allows such an accurate prediction of the developmental schedule.

This processing perspective has important implications for measurement and teaching. As far as measurement is concerned, the theory of processing complexity increases the constraint validity of second language screening procedures. The logic behind that proposition is that since we have shown that fixed stages of acquisition are due to universal speech processing skills, we can safely assure that these stages can be found in all learners.

The second implication is known as the Teachability Hypothesis (Pienemann 1984). The Teachability Hypothesis is simply the extension of the processing capacity approach to the classroom context. If learners are constrained in what they can learn in natural situations by the available processing skills, do the same constraints also apply to the influence of teaching? According to the Teachability Hypothesis the answer is yes. Pienemann (1984, 1987) provided ample empirical evidence in support of this hypothesis, which, it should be noted, has been formulated in such a way that it is testable for the whole range of second language grammar. Many studies have since replicated these results.

The existence of such constraints on teachability underline the importance of a screening procedure in second language

teaching: since teaching is only effective if it is aimed at the right level of skill, that level has to be determined for every individual learner. Note also that the syllabus that goes along with this line of thinking, can be written in accordance with the learner's developing grammar (Pienemann, 1983).

THE SITUATION FOR RAPID PROFILE.

Rapid Profile can be carried out in real time by a procedure taking approximately 15 minutes. The data used is spoken. The procedure can also be carried out in two sessions, where the data is taped and the observations are made from the tape. However it is of course much less time-consuming if done in real time. Ideally the procedure includes the following participants:

- an informant - the person whose profile is being obtained
- an analyst - the person who sits at the computer and makes the observations
- a facilitator - the person who elicits the data, using the tasks.

While it is also possible for the analyst to elicit the data at

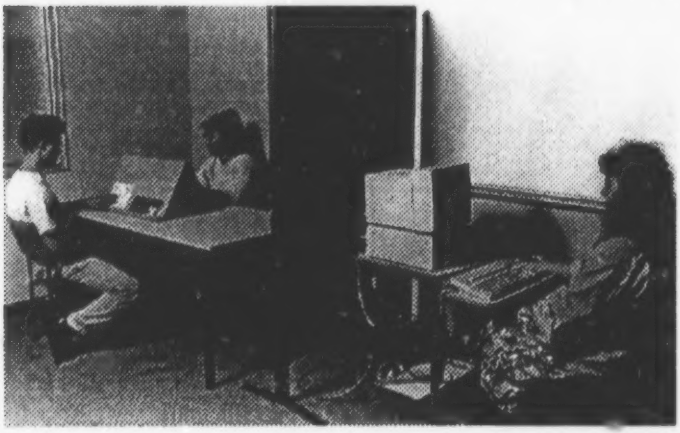

Figure 2 The Rapid Profile Scenario.

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the same time as making the observations, this is not the ideal situation. The procedure is at its most efficient when the analyst can concentrate exclusively on the data. A further reason for separating these roles is that the informant is likely to be intimidated by the focus of the analyst on the computer as opposed to what s/he is saying.

As shown in the photograph in Figure 2, the facilitator and the informant sit together, with the analyst sitting at the computer, separated by a wall or screen, or even in a separate room. Feedback from the analyst is available to the facilitator at any time via a remote display panel, allowing her/him to elicit what is required at any given time. The facilitator does not need to be trained in the techniques of Rapid Profile, but just requires a brief introduction to the procedure and some basic briefing on how to administer the tasks and recognise the feedback. The feedback shows the progress of the informant and highlights any potential gaps in development, allowing the facilitator to tailor the task to the informant's stage, eliminating redundant information and focusing on data required by the program.

DATA ELICITATION

LARC has developed an elicitation procedure for Rapid Profile which ensures that the speech produced by the informant is both naturalisitic and as useful as possible. *Useful* means containing as many of the structures which are necessary for Rapid Profile as possible. The elicitation procedure was designed to avoid the gaps in data samples of English which had previously been noted. The procedure also attempts to control the use of avoidance strategies which often occur in learner speech and to provide contexts for certain structures so that presence/ absence/ oversuppliance can be noted. (These terms are explained with examples in section 6.)

Tasks: why they are used

The elicitation procedure is task rather than formal interview

based. Tasks avoid many of the problems of traditional interview elicitation techniques which include such things as unequal topic control, dominance of turn-taking etc and are often not suitable for situations where for example migrants/refugees have recently arrived in a country and interviews are not carried out with sensitivity. Space constraints prevent a review of the literature on the effects of tasks on discourse (eg Long 1985, 1989, Pica 1987/88/89 etc), but the LARC task based elicitation procedure was designed in accordance with current research.

The tasks were designed to trigger specific structures or to provide contexts for those structures. These structures are necessary for Rapid Profile; it is these which the analyst is listening for and which the facilitator is trying to elicit via the tasks.

A preliminary statistical analysis of the success of the tasks has been carried out. The findings can be summarised briefly as follows: the tasks were successful in either eliciting the structures for which they were designed or providing contexts for those structures. This is with the exception of negatives which proved difficult to elicit across all tasks. The tasks were compared with each other and the most successful tasks were identified and are currently being refined. The informal interview situation did not

Figure 3 Informant and Facilitator using tasks.

Figure 4 Analyst recording observations

yield as much data as the tasks.

Current research being undertaken at LARC for the Rapid Profile elicitation procedure is the redesigning of the tasks to eliminate the sociocultural bias and also further data collection and analysis to facilitate better understanding of the function of tasks in elicitation of morpho-syntactic structures.

The Tasks.

The tasks are designed to be as impersonal as possible, so they avoid things like interviewer dominance and informant shyness. They have a clear communicative goal to be performed and could even be described as entertaining. Figures 3 and 4 show the tasks being used by informants.

Tasks: description

There are currently 6 task types used for the Rapid Profile elicitation procedure, although these are currently being redesigned

for the general market. Each task was designed with a view to eliciting particular structures. The tasks and their anticipated data are described briefly here

Three tasks (including the informal interview task) can be carried out by the informant and the facilitator:

1. *Habitual Actions* - The facilitator asks the informant to look at photos showing pictures of everyday activities, eg a librarian at work, and asks what him/her to say what a police officer/librarian does every day?
Designed to elicit - **3SGs**

2. *Story Completion* - The informant is shown a set of pictures, and is asked to find the story to fit the pictures by asking the facilitator questions eg a person who has been poisoned needs to find an antidote/cure./ A man whose wife has just had a baby argues with her about the baby's name.
Designed to elicit - **Wh Questions - Why/What**

3. *Informal Interview* - This is simply free conversation, where the informant is encouraged to ask questions of

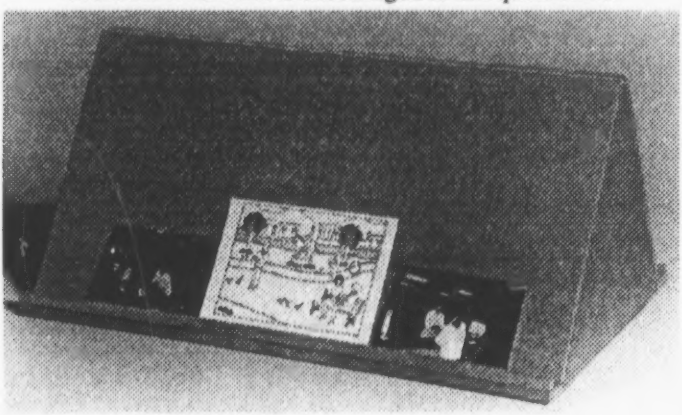

Figure 5 Tasks and division board.

the facilitator.
Designed to elicit - **General/Qs**

Three tasks can be carried out by two informants (the facilitator is interactive in a supportive way). A board, illustrated in Figure 5, has been designed which prevents participants in the tasks from seeing their partner's cards/pictures:

4. *Picture Sequencing* - Closed (where participants are told of the purpose/ limitations of the task) tasks, in which two informants are each given part of a story, eg of a person being assaulted on their way home, and asked to sequence (order) the pictures between them by asking questions.
Designed to elicit - **Qs and Negs (responses)**

5. *Picture Differences* - Closed tasks of "spot the difference". Informants ask questions to exchange information about their cards.
Designed to elicit - **Q's and Negs.**

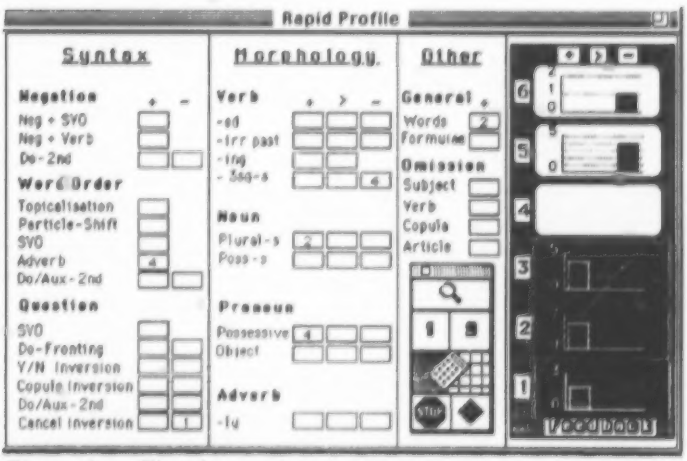

Figure 6 The observation screen

6. *Meet partner* - Informants in dyads "interview" each other and introduce each other to facilitator.
Designed to elicit - **Qs and 3SGs.**

The following section of this report will take the form of a user guide for the Rapid Profile software.

FEATURES OF RAPID PROFILE- OBSERVATIONS.

Within Rapid Profiling, observations are captured using the screen shown in Figure 6. This interface would be used by the human assessor during the task elicitation/assessment session described earlier.

The observation screen contains an entry for each of the ESL structures which are used by Rapid Profiling to map out the process of language development. On this screen the structures are grouped according to very broad grammatical categories. This grouping is basically arbitrary, and is designed to aid users in locating the structures as quickly as possible during assessment sessions. A full description of all the structures with examples is given in Table 1 at the end of this brochure.

An observation is recorded by simply positioning the mouse and clicking in one of the boxes adjacent to the structure labels. These boxes represent:

- Suppliance (+)
  A structure is observed in a valid context.
  For example, the presence of 3rd person singular 's' in the following sentence, "She walks to the park"
- Nonsuppliance (-)
  A structure is missing from a context where its presence is obligatory in standard English.
  For example, "She walk to the park"
- Oversuppliance (>)
  The the use of a structure has been overgeneralised
  For example, "They walks to the park"

Each click of the mouse is counted as one observation. These observations are stored by the computer for later processing and are displayed as a running count in the respective boxes. Thus, for example, we can see from Figure 1 that the assessor has observed 4 examples of possessive pronouns.

If the user accidently clicks in the wrong box, a single keystroke can be used to undo the mistake. Error correction can be performed at any time regardless of when the erroneous observation was made.

With some structures the computer will request additional information whenever an observation is made. Figure 7 illustrates this process. Here the computer is asking the user to type in the stem of the lexical verb that occured within the context of an observed structure. This information is stored in a separate table and is used to constrain Rapid Profiling's expert system when it generates hypotheses about the level of a learner.

Figure 8 is an example of one of the constraint tables created by Rapid Profiling. This table records the verb stems which have occured with one of the four verb suffix morphemes. Morphological and lexical totals are kept to ensure that there is sufficient variation in the data to rule out the use of formulae.

Returning to Figure 6, the right hand side of the observation screen is used to provide feedback on the status of ongoing assessment sessions. This feedback is available to both the assessor and the facilitator (via the remote display panel) at any time during the session. The assessor can use the online feedback to focus his/her own attention towards structures and stages for which data is limited. This can significantly reduce the number of structures which have to be monitored. The facilitator can use the feedback to guide the application of tasks to ensure that the interaction with the learner provides sufficient contexts for structures at all levels.

A separate graph is provided for summarising the observations entered for structures within each of the six stages of development predicted by Rapid Profiling theory. For each graph the horizontal axis is fixed with a bar representing suppliance, oversuppliance and nonsuppliance respectively. The

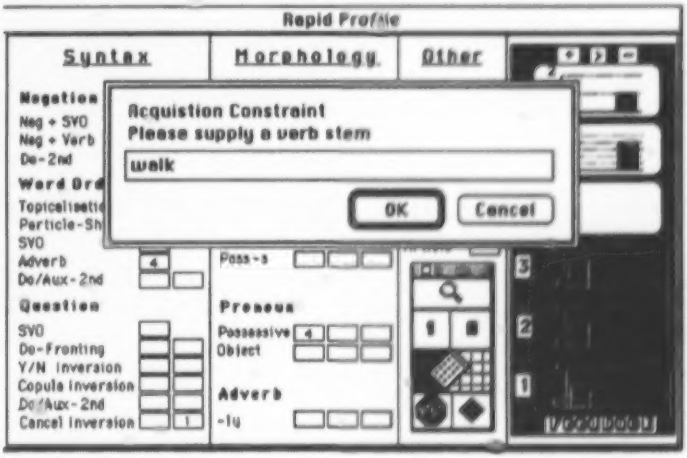

Figure 7 *Acquisition Constraints*

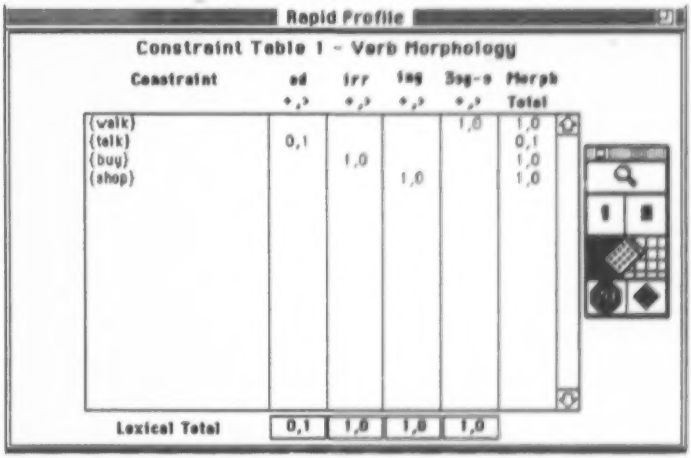

Figure 8 *Constraint Table*

vertical axis represents the number of observations and is scaled according to the volume of data within a given stage.

When there is sufficient data for Rapid Profiling to hypothesise that a particular stage has been acquired, the relevant graph will be highlighted in black. When there is no data for a given stage the relevant graph will appear as a white blank. These features enable fast visual identification of acquired stages and acquisitional gaps.

The last point of interest on the observation screen is the navigation palette. This device is Initially located at the bottom of the last column of structures, but can be relocated anywhere on the screen as the user requires. The navigation palette enables the assessor to move very quickly to and from the various modules of Rapid Profiling. Each area of the palette is linked to a specific Rapid Profiling module so that when the user clicks on a particular area, the program control is shifted accordingly. Thus, clicking on the topmost rectangle of the palette, which is marked with a magnifying glass, will always return the user to the observation screen. The two numbered squares take the user to the constraint tables. The area marked with a calculator is used to locate the user within the report module. The stop sign enables the user to exit from Rapid Profiling or to restart a session while the question mark is used to call Rapid Profiling's help facility.

Reports

Rapid Profiling's online feedback facility can be used to provide an accurate summary of the progress of an assessment session at any time during that session. When the assessor or the facilitator are satisfied that sufficient observations have been recorded, a much more detailed evaluation of the data can be performed using Rapid Profiling's built in report module.

Like the observation screen, the report, shown in Figure 9 has an entry displaying the data for each of the ESL structures. Here, however, the structures are organised according to Rapid Profiling's hierarchy of development. In one sense the report can

be seen as teasing apart the information summarised by the online feedback.

It can be seen that while syntactic structures can be definitively placed within the stage structure, current research can only suggest a broad stage range for the majority of the morphological structures.

An accuracy measure is calculated for each of the structures. The column labelled "%" represents positive suppliance as a percentage of total observations for a given structure.

A checkmark is used to indicate those structures which are considered to have been acquired. The acquisition rules are based on the emergence criteria outlined above and are coded into Rapid Profiling's expert shell.

Probably the single most important aspect of the Rapid Profiling's report module is the profile assessment that is displayed at the top of the report screen. This stage hypothesis represents Rapid Profiling's overall assessment of the learner's language based on observations recorded, the information contained in the constraint tables and any possible gaps or contradictions in the data. Significant lack of or irregularities in the data are reported

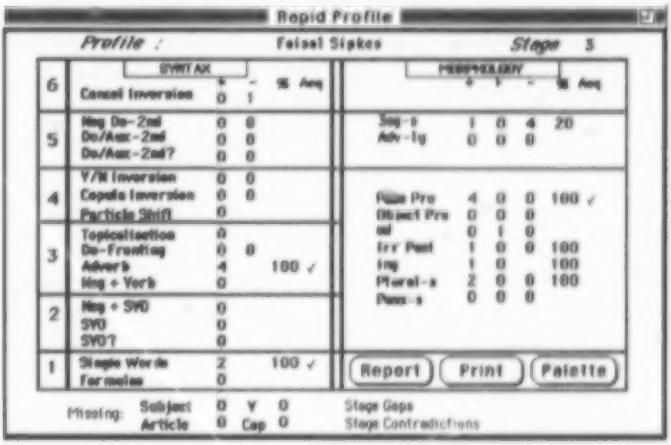

Figure 9 Reports

as gaps and contradictions at the bottom right of the report screen.

Given a valid set of observations, a learner can always be accurately placed within the cognitive stage structure that underlies the Rapid Profiling system.

Rapid Profile as an information source

A useful side-effect of using Rapid Profile as an assessment method, is that a large amount of data relating to a particular student's or informant's language is recorded and stored on the computer. As we shall see, this information can be organised and retrieved at any time in the future to accomadate the needs of a particular user.

One important feature of the Rapid Profile procedure is that data entered into the system will remain stable at all times. If you were using a pen-and-paper method of observation, you would be highly surprised if your observations mysteriously disappeared. Rapid Profile's 'electronic' observations are, if anything, more robust. The assessor is free to suspend operation of or exit from the system at any time, to use the computer for other purposes or even to switch the power off completely without having to worry about explicitly 'saving' the Rapid Profile data. When operation is resumed, even if an extended period of time has elapsed, the user will be presented with a profile in exactly the same state of completion as before. Although extended periods of time should not be necessary for Rapid Profile assessment, this feature ensures that unexpected interruptions or session timing difficulties do not present a problem.

There would be little point in maintaining a body of profile data if this data could not be organised and accessed as some form of useful reference source. Incorporated into Rapid Profile is an Archive mechanism which basically doubles as an old fashioned filing cabinet.

The user can create any number of archive files, choosing names which will be meaningful within a given context. For

example, if an assessor is responsible for a given number of classes, a separate archive file could be created for each class using a naming stratergy such as "Class-1-archive" to "Class-n-Archive". As each student is assessed, the resulting profile is saved into the relevant archive file.

When a profile is 'saved', a copy is taken of all of the profile data, including the observation screen, the constraint tables and the profile report. This information is then available at all times, allowing the user to browse or step through the various profiles contained in an archive file. An index card is created so that users can quickly identify and examine specific profiles.

Figure 10 is an example of the biographical information that can be stored along with a profile. Such information helps to identify specific profiles within an archive file and is also potentially useful as a student record mechanism.

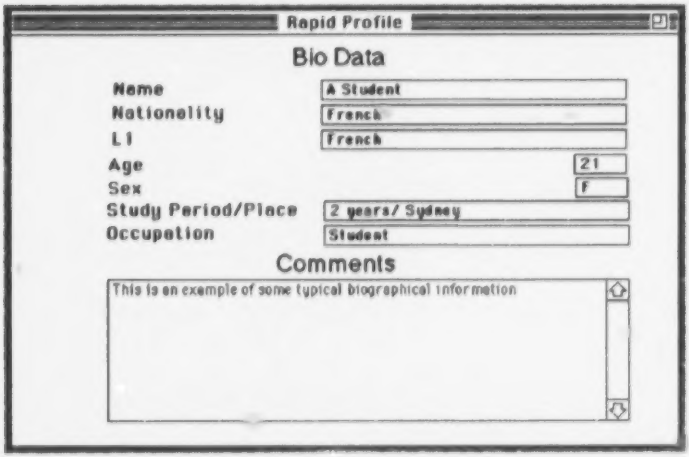

Figure 10. Biodata

The information stored in an archive file is what is termed 'Read-Only" data. That is, users are free to step through and examine all of the data but they cannot change any of the values

contained therein. However, Rapid Profile does allow the user to 'load' a profile from an archive file into Rapid Profile itself and continue working on (ie change) that profile. The updated profile may then be used to replace the original archive entry or may be stored as a new and independent entry.

TRAINING

Rapid Profile represents a major step forward in the field of language assessment. It is easy to use, accurate, reliable and economical, both in terms of test administration and in the amount of information that can be extracted from a limited amount of data.

However, to gain maximum benefit from this technique, potential users must invest a certain amount of time and effort in order to become fully conversant with both the theoretical and the practical aspects of Rapid Profile.

To correctly administer a Rapid Profile assessment, a user must be aware of the key concepts from second language acquistion research, such as interlanguage development and teachability, which are part of the general framework that surrounds the procedure. More obviously the user must be able to recognise and understand the grammatical structures which are the basis of the observations and have a good working knowledge of task-based elicitation techniques.

The above skills can be easily acquired through a combination of taught workshops and guided self-study. Potentially more problematic, is the question of becoming familiar with the computer interface itself.

It would be unacceptable for users to be told to gain experience solely by assessing their students. The weak link in the Rapid Profile chain is undoubtedly the human user. If the computer is presented with insufficient or incorrect observations it will quite obviously fail to provide an accurate profile. From the very first time an assessor administers the Rapid Profile procedure he/she must be familiar with all aspects of its use.

To address this problem LARC has developed a training

environment which is able to simulate as accurately as possible the real-life assessment scenario. LARC has produced a series of audio CDs which contain a wide range of learner speech data recorded during task-based elicitation sessions. The Rapid Profile trainee is able to listen to these sessions while at the same time attempting to make observations about the language of the learner via the computer interface. The structural content of the speech contained on the CDs has been previously analysed at LARC and is stored on the computer. It is thus possible for the training program to match up the observations made by the trainee with the benchmark analyses. Instantaneous feedback can be given to the trainee on the quality of their observations and an indepth analysis of their performance can be produced when the training session has been completed. Figure 10 is an example of the type of on-line feedback which is available to the trainee during the training session.

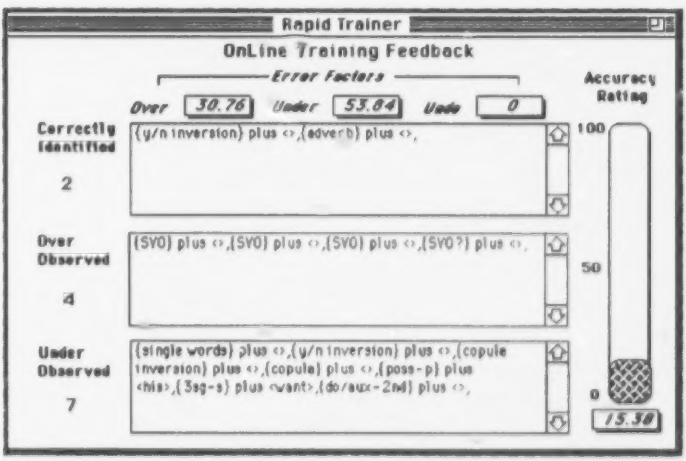

Figure 11 On line Feedback

It is possible for the trainee to structure the training session to meet his/her particular needs or requirements. It is possible to play back particular grammatical structures, a sequence of

structures from a specific learner or specific level of development, or entire task sessions. The playback can be paused at any time and it is possible to repeat sections of the speech as many times as required. The training observation screen can also be simplified so that it contains only those structures which are present in the data currently being presented.

The training procedure has been designed so that it can be used with a minimum of supervision. Due to the technology involved however, it will be necessary for users to visit designated training centres rather than working with their own computers. When trainees are satisfied with their performance on the training data, supervised certification tests can be taken. It will be necessary for users to receive certification before becoming recognised Rapid Profile assessors.

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LANGUAGE USE IN CLASSROOMS IN WESTERN SAMOAN SCHOOLS[1]

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Anthony Liddicoat
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ABSTRACT

This article describes the results of a study of classroom use of English and Samoan in Junior Secondary School classrooms in Western Samoa.

The study was commissioned by the Secondary Teacher's College of Western Samoa with a view to guiding it in the important decisions it had to make about the appropriate language of instruction for the various subjects of the curriculum. 145 classroom observations are utilised to describe and analyse the general pattern of English-Samoan mixing and preferred usage. Whilst only a preliminary study it nevertheless points to significant pedagogical implications of the patterning of instructional and interactional language use which might have a broader applicability across Pacific education systems.

INTRODUCTION

All nations face the dilemma of the appropriate degree of emphasis to allocate in education to the modern demands of economy and society with those of tradition and distinctiveness. This is particularly acute for societies which are recently independent and are attempting to forge a secure national cultural identity while developing in their citizens the skills and competencies to facilitate economic progress. In cases such as that typified by the small Pacific Island Nation of Western Samoa there is a linguistic parallel to this broader issue. This is the extent to which national

progress through education cultivates the national language or perpetuates the dominance of the former colonial and more prestigious language, in this case English. The constitution of Western Samoa declares the nation to be officially bilingual; the education system, however, is dominated by English. However, in common with other Pacific Island States. the past ten years have seen a clear pattern of enhancing the status of the indigenous language.(Lo Bianco and Wilson 1988)

At the same time education systems serve the practical imperatives of imparting to the future generations the skills, knowledge and attitudes which the society values. In this respect, the language question becomes one of utilitarian adoption of the most effective and efficient means of imparting the general curriculum. English has long had an important role in Samoan education and, for many Samoans, education itself is equated with learning to speak English (Ma'ia'i 1957 quoted in Baldauf 1990). Before independence from New Zealand in 1962, government schools treated Samoan as a bridge to English rather than as an acceptable medium of instruction in its own right. Since independence, there has been a slow growth towards according a more prominent place to Samoan; in 1966 a Samoan language and customs syllabus was introduced (Baldauf 1990:272) and subsequently Samoan was introduced as the language of instruction in the manual arts syllabus of the junior secondary schools. All other areas of the curriculum at this level are meant to be taught in English. The prevailing practice is, however, much more complex, and, depending on the particular school, its locality and the training of the teachers concerned a great deal of language mixing occurs. This practice is also influenced by the greater command of Samoan of many children requiring explanatory information to be provided in that language.

Issues

In the process of revising the curriculum of the junior secondary schools from the mid-1980's, the question of the appropriate

language of instruction arose. To inform these discussions and to assist in obtaining a more objective view of the actual practice in these schools, it was decided to conduct a series of structured observations of classrooms. Practical considerations precluded the use of long term ethnographic methodologies, and the policy oriented nature of the request dictated the extensive involvement of the principals of the schools of teachers in training and those participating in in-service programs and the curriculum writers and reviewers, many of whom were foreign aid experts on loan to the local education authorities.

METHODOLOGY

In his detailed review of methodological issues in classroom research, Long (1983) identifies and analyses the two broad approaches which have characterised the field; interaction analysis and anthropological observation. Interaction analysis involves the use of instruments to standardise data, its collection and analysis. Anthropological observation covers the application to education, and in particular to school and classroom research, of the methods of ethnography. Both approaches encompass a wide number of possible specific techniques.

Long points out the weaknesses and strengths of the various techniques incorporated under either approach and argues that;

> a combination of methods plus some modification in commonly used research designs is necessary if the field is to achieve its ultimate goal of testing a theory of of second language acquistion with the aid of formal instruction.
>
> (Long 1983:27)

Ethnography consists of detailed, rich systematic, though often unstructured observation of phenomena. Although deriving primarily from the fieldwork of anthropology, ethnographic approaches are now applied to many areas of contemporary urban

life as well. Because ethnography is fundamentally hypothesis-generating, rather than hypothesis-testing, and because it usually focuses on small *n*-size, it was decided that interaction analysis would be preferred as the approach to the classroom observations in the present study. Practical considerations of time and other constraints also militated against other more qualitative approaches.

There are many instruments available for standardising observations about classroom behaviour. These vary in their scoring techniques, the degree of inference the researcher is required to make in transposing the observed behaviour to one of the categories on the instrument, as well as in the number, type and quality of the categories they contain. It was decided to adapt an interaction instrument to the task of assessing the pattern of English-Samoan language use in classrooms due to the relative ease of conducting this work and the potential it offered for a large number of cases to be studied. The use of "triangulation" further ensured the dependability of the results and lowered the risk of observer error.

An adaptation of the Jarvis and Adams (1979) instrument was adopted as its ease of operation suited the circumstances under which the research was undertaken. (See also Lo Bianco 1987) The instrument codes exchanges in class with real time recording of interactions. Every 5 minutes the dominant event of linguistic behaviour of the teacher and the students was scored against the language choice (Samoan/English) and a number of functions pre-coded onto the instrument. (See Table 1) The codings were then converted to percentages of time devoted to each language and to each function. Observer training included the possibility of additional observations about classroom interactions and salient events and space for these observations was allowed on the coding sheets.

Coding was carried out by teacher trainees and teachers on in-service projects at the Secondary Teachers College of Western Samoa in Apia. Training sessions in the use of the instrument were run prior to the commencement of the data collection process. The

work was supervised by Ms. Tili Afasamaga, principal of the STC and by Dr. Ruth Gerlach, Senior Lecturer at the STC.

The data were collected from 149 classes in the Junior Secondary Schools of Western Samoa during three weeks in April-May of 1987. Of the 149 classes investigated, only 145 were considered suitable for analysis. The classes covered eight different subject areas: Business/Commercial Studies, English Home Economics, Manual Arts, Mathematics, Samoan Studies, Science and Social Science. The official language of instruction in all of

Teacher language functions	Student language functions
Student behaviour management	responding to teacher
praising students	expressing self in group discussion
encouraging	asking teacher to clarify a point
/acknowledging feelings	asking permission
slight reprimand	
Presentation of lessons	
asking questions	
explaining	
giving instructions/directions	
Translation	
asking questions	
explaining	
giving instructions	
Other	
joking	
swearing	
responding to students' questions/comments	
justifying authority	

Table 1 Language functions coded

these subject areas is English, with the exception of Samoan Studies and Manual Arts which are officially intended to be taught in Samoan. The English language subjects all use English language materials and are examined in English. Each lesson was of forty minutes duration.

The coding system used proved to have one shortcoming in that it was not possible to determine patterns of interaction from the coding sheets alone. As a result, it was impossible to tell whether or not the choice of language in many instances was conditioned by the preceding utterance. With this limitation in mind, however, the coding sheets adequately demonstrate language choice in absolute terms and by function.

INPUT AND INTERACTION

Language use in classrooms and speech modification patterns are two of the nine research themes and topics which emerge from an analysis of second language acquisition research around the world in recent years (NLIA 1990). The former derives from classroom oriented research and, among other areas, addresses itself to roles and patterns of interaction, and the relationships among different elements, eg task and activity types which promote successful interactions and comprehensible input of linguistic data to learners. Speech modification patterns address the ways in which learners seek comprehensible input, the nature of that input, how learners process the input which is addressed to them or which they generate, the role played in the acquisition of the second language by the input and the discourse roles and functions performed by different speakers, native and non-native.

The Western Samoan teacher educators and the curriculum advisers along with the foreign aid experts were attempting to re-invigorate practice in the junior secondary schools along more participatory lines. They stressed a more communicative approach to the language classrooms as the linguistic correlate of this general pedagogical change. In bilingual classrooms, as Wong-Fillmore (1982) has shown, instructional language performs two crucial

roles, it is both message-conveying language and language modelling the target language. Teacher-centred practice has the likely advantage of modelling correct forms of the target language but reduces the linguistic space available for the learners. Conversely student-centred practice can have the opposite problems and potential.

The nature and quality of input is held by many researchers to be a, or even the, key variable in language acquisition (Burt and Dulay 1981, Krashen 1981,1982, Krashen and Terrell 1983; Wagner-Gough and Hatch 1975, Wong Fillmore 1982) and comprehensible input is one of the more important factors in promoting second language acquisition. If input is to be comprehensible, teaching needs to be exclusively in the target language and be accompanied by situational stimuli which assist the understanding of the target language message.

Krashen (1981,1982) has put forward an interrelated set of hypotheses based on a distinction between conscious learning through formal study, which he calls Acquisition, and informal, naturalistic learning, which he calls Learning. According to Krashen, Acquisition generates utterances in the target language whereas Learning yields more consciously monitored and formalised performance. A central concept in Krashen's theory is the input hypothesis, which holds that language is acquired when the acquirer understands messages which are a little beyond his/her current level of proficiency.

The Western Samoan authorities sought to obtain a picture of actual practice in their junior secondary schools in order to explore the practical effect of views such as those put forward by the input theorists. The junior secondary schools are a relatively new creation, expressing the social need both to diversify educational offerings away from the previously narrow and early split between a technical stream for the majority, and an academic stream for the minority, and at the same time to advance the educational prospects of the non-urban majority. A practical effect of their creation was the serious problem of teacher shortages, filled by upgrading primary teachers and also by retraining.

Another effect was linguistic; teachers trained to teach only in English found themselves teaching older children who in most cases were stronger in Samoan in a curriculum increasingly exhorting them to adopt a practice which was less teacher centred and, in language classrooms, more communicatively oriented.

The observer's commentaries and the triangulation process, in which a second observer, the teacher and selected students commented on the observations, enrich the data and assist its interpretation. The following results represent the most extensive observation of classroom interactions in Samoan schools and, despite the necessarily preliminary nature of the research, have already been incorporated into curriculum and language planning there.

RESULTS

It is clear from the results that the policy of using English in some areas of the curriculum and Samoan in others is not upheld in practice. Samoan teachers employ a mixing approach (McLaughlin 1978) to bilingual teaching, in which both languages are used concurrently in all subject areas. This approach involves

Subject	English	Samoan	p=
Commerce/Business Studies	61.529	38.426	.000
English	53.432	46.591	.118
Mathematics	46.968	52.977	.148
Home Economics	44.063	55.928	.015
Social Science	44.144	55.926	.011
Science	39.903	61.280	.000
Manual Arts	36.420	63.520	.000
Samoan	3.883	96.111	.000
Total	41.154	58.845	.000

Table 2 Total language use by subject – % of time spent

considerable translation of material already expressed in the other language.

Table 2 demonstrates that the mixing approach is spread across the curriculum and that there are no subjects which are taught monolingually. In almost all subjects, Samoan is more frequent than English as a language of instruction, and where this occurs, the difference in language use is significant at about the 1% level. In English and Mathematics classes, however, the preponderance of Samoan is not statistically significant. The two exceptions to Samoan dominance as the language of instruction are English (53.432% English language) and Commerce (61.529% English).

Teachers use large amounts of Samoan to conduct their lessons in the English language areas of the curriculum. (See Table 3.) It is, however, not just in the English medium classes than mixing is found. Language mixing is so much a feature of the educational practice of Samoan teachers that it is found even in the native language areas of the curriculum, such as Manual Arts and Samoan language and culture. Samoan is, however,

Subject	English	Samoan	Total	p =
Commerce/Business Studies	46.343	34.947	81.290	.193
English	40.709	38.515	79.224	.749
Home Economics	35.930	42.103	78.033	.435
Mathematics	35.653	40.257	75.932	.286
Social Science	34.626	43.257	77.872	.050
Science	30.058	46.732	76.789	.003
Manual Arts	29.864	49.676	79.539	.002
Samoan	3.479	64.596	68.075	.000
Total	31.942	45.013	76.956	.007

Table 3 Teacher language use by subject – % of time spent

exceptional in that only 3.479% of class time is devoted to English. Raw scores for Samoan vary from 0 to 12.499% of interactions. The three Samoan classes and the Manual Arts class which scored 0 for English were the only monolingual classes coded for either language. The other Manual Arts classes which are officially taught in Samoan showed considerable use of English and there was only one Samoan only class coded.

Language mixing is not only a feature of teacher language use but also of student language use. In only nine of the 145 classes coded did students not use Samoan, and five of these were English classes (See Table 4). The remaining four occurred in Commerce (1 class), Mathematics (1 class) and science (1 class). There were also ten classes coded as Samoan only classes for student language use. Of these four were classes in Samoan as a subject. The other five classes were distributed among Manual Arts (1 class), Mathematics (4 classes), Social Science (1 class) and Science (1 class).

Subject	English	Samoan	Total	p =
Commerce/Business Studies	15.186	3.479	18.666	.003
English	12.723	8.076	20.799	.196
Mathematics	11.315	12.669	24.013	.720
Social Science	9.528	12.669	22.198	.390
Science	9.845	14.549	24.394	.208
Home Economics	8.133	13.825	21.957	.118
Manual Arts	6.557	13.845	20.401	.037
Samoan	0.403	31.515	31.919	.000
Total	9.211	13.832	23.043	.215

Table 4 Student language use by subject – % of time spent

Function	English	Samoan	Total	p =
Student behaviour management				
praising students	2.167	2.625	4.792	.490
encouraging/ acknowledging feelings	3.116	3.640	6.756	.431
slight reprimand	1.033	2.322	3.355	.076
total	6.316	8.580	14.903	.007
Presentation of lessons				
asking questions	4.992	6.133	10.125	.109
explaining	6.127	6.723	12.850	.374
giving instructions/ directions	3.060	4.164	7.224	.079
total	14.270	17.020	31.290	.000
Translation				
asking questions	2.752	3.522	6.274	.258
explaining	2.161	4.177	6.333	.006
giving instructions	2.179	3.262	5.441	.125
total	7.092	10.961	18.054	.000
Other				
joking	0.806	2.106	2.912	.021
swearing	0.486	1.387	1.873	.034
responding to students' questions/comments	2.595	4.289	6.884	.008
justifying authority	0.387	0.662	1.049	.000
total	4.265	8.445	12.528	.000
Total teacher language	31.943	45.013	76.956	.141

Table 5 Teacher language use – % of time spent

In all classes in which students used Samoan only, there was a low level of English use by the teacher. In all cases the use of English occupied less that 13% of class time. This would be expected in classes in which Samoan was the official language of instruction, but the data indicates that some 'officially' English classes are being taught almost exclusively in Samoan. One science class was in fact coded for 96% Samoan language use.

Classes in which English is used exclusively by the students have much higher levels of language mixing than those in which students use only Samoan. These classes mostly use 23–31% Samoan, although one class uses as much as 45% Samoan and one as little as 16%. In the classes where English was used by students, Samoan is used for translation of English lesson material, but its use is restricted in other domains. Moreover, these students use

Function	English	Samoan	Total	p =
responding to teacher	4.820	6.151	10.971	.028
expressing self in group discussion	1.826	2.788	4.614	.092
asking permission	1.078	1.858	2.926	.200
asking teacher to clarify a point	1.487	3.036	4.523	.013
Total student language	9.211	13.832	23.043	.000

Table 6 Student language use – % of time spent

Qualification	English	Samoan	p =
Primary Teachers Certificate	31.401	46.571	.002
Secondary Teachers Certificate	35.297	41.537	.121
Overseas Degree or Diploma[2]	44.348	31.214	.005
p =	.009	.003	

Table 7 Teacher qualification and language use

English primarily to respond to the teacher and do not tend to initiate interaction in English.

Table 5 shows that at there is no function in which English dominates Samoan. Samoan is used for presentation of lessons and for student behaviour management as well as for translation. This demonstrates that, in these classes, Samoan is functioning quite fully as a language of instruction and is not used solely to explain English language instruction.

It can also bee seen in Table 5 that a large proportion of the lesson material which is presented in English is later translated into Samoan. A considerable amount of material is also presented in Samoan and later translated into English. There remains only a small amount of lesson material which students must comprehend in English in order to understand the content of the lesson. The language used in presenting lesson material in the classroom is of great importance in language acquisition. The messages conveyed are likely to contain new information and, as such, are most likely to provide input at $i+1$.

The frequency of translation in the Samoan classes (18% of class time) indicates that these students are receiving a large number of identical messages in both languages during the course of the lesson. This prevalence of translation and the presence of instruction in the native language indicate that students would not have to attend to English language utterances in order to follow the lesson and to understand at least some of what is happening in class. Such students may appear to be familiar with some of the course material but be at a serious disadvantage when sitting English language examinations.

Students show a marked preference for Samoan in class, using on average twice as much Samoan as English. They typically use English when responding to the teacher, but when producing unsolicited utterances such as discussion and requests, they show a strong preference for Samoan.

There does not seem to be a significant difference in language use between teachers who have completed their training in Samoa, whether they hold a Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC) or a

Secondary Teachers Certificate (STC). Both of these groups favour Samoan over English. Teachers who have been educated outside Samoa, however, appear to prefer English to Samoan as a language of instruction.

It is clear that language mixing is a feature of the Samoan classroom, but teacher language use does not appear to correlate with student language use. There does not appear to be a correlation either between the amount of English used by the teacher and the amount of English used by the students ($\rho = .090$ ns) nor is there a significant correlation between the proportion of English and Samoan used by the teacher and the proportion used by the students ($\rho = .121$ ns). It appears that, regardless of the teacher's preference for one language over another, students tend to opt for Samoan to communicate in a mixing environment. It appears that, only where Samoan and English are compartmentalized according to language function, is there a tendency for students to communicate in English.

DISCUSSION

Mixing approaches, such as that used in Samoa, have been shown to have several major disadvantages as a method of bilingual education (Cummins and Swain 1986, Wong Fillmore 1980, Legaretta 1979).

When language mixing and translation occurs, students tend to ignore the material presented in the unfamiliar language. If similar messages are available in both languages, then there is no motivation for the student to make an effort to understand the message being presented in the second language. Wong Fillmore (1980:29) reports that in classrooms where language mixing occurs, the students learn to alternate systematically between attentiveness and inattentiveness as the teacher switches from the familiar to the unfamiliar language. Students simply stop listening when they do not understand what is being said.

A second disadvantage of the mixing approach is that neither teachers nor students have to make as much effort to encode and

decode utterances in the less familiar language. In order to assist the student to comprehend input, teachers modify their utterances in the target language to produce input which will help the acquirer understand the information which is being communicated (Henzl 1979, Long and Sato 1983, Wong Fillmore 1985). Concurrent use of both languages and frequent translation, short–circuit the process of modifying language (Wong Fillmore 1985:35). Instead of modifying target language utterances to assist the student to understand the information communicated, the teacher relies on native language utterances to given students access to meaning.

The students, gaining access to meaning through translation, do not have to build and test hypotheses in order to comprehend target language utterances. While target language utterances are available as input, there is no motivation for the utterance to become intake (Corder 1967). The target language utterances can be ignored, and it is instead the Samoan language utterances which are taken in.

It is difficult for teachers using a mixing approach to monitor the amount of time spent using each language. Bilingual individuals are frequently unaware of which language they are using at a given time or that they have shifted from one language to another. Teachers can then be exepected to be inaccurate in their perception of how much of each language is being used. This appears to be the case in Samoa, where teachers seem to be unaware of the predominance of Samoan in their officially English language classes.

Bilingual programmes which work well for language acquisition have been shown to be those in which the languages used are kept separate (Cohen and Swain 1976, Wong Fillmore 1985). Separation of languages according to specific domains, times or functions is, then, an essential element in an immersion bilingual programme such as that practiced in Samoa. While separation of languages on the basis of subject is officially the policy in Samoa, the stated policy is not being upheld in the schools.

Cummins and Swain (1986) maintain that concepts are best

learned if they are presented in the language with which the student is most familiar. Once learned, concepts can be easily transferred from one language to another, the student needing to acquire only the new label. Thus, a student who acquires the concepts involved in science or commerce in his/her native language has that concept available for use in the target language once the necessary labels are available. For Samoan Junior Secondary School students, this means that the subject matter officially taught in English could, perhaps, be acquired better in Samoan and the concept could then be transferred to English.

The Samoan education system has used English for more technical subjects such as science, mathematics and commerce, because it was felt that Samoan lacked the necessary vocabulary to teach such subjects. This study has, however, demonstrated that Samoan is being used to teach technical subjects and that the necessary concepts can, therefore, be conveyed in Samoan.

Teachers are currently resorting to circumlocutions and other devices to express the concepts, and some vocabulary development would be needed if Samoan were to function effectively as a language of instruction in the technical areas of the curriculum. This need for vocabulary development has already been recognized by some Western Samoan authorities (Lo Bianco and Wilson 1988:96). Samoan teachers, however, have demonstrated that Samoan is equal to the task of communicating academic material in a broad range of disciplines.

NOTES

1 This article reports a research study designed by Joseph Lo Bianco with the assistance of Ms T. Afamasaga, and Dr R. Gerlach. The assistance of the students at the Western Samoa Secondary Teachers College and the Principals and teachers of the Junior secondary schools is gratefully acknowledged .

2 Qualifications include diplomas from the University of the South Pacific and Bachelors degrees from New Zealand.

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THE INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING SYSTEM (IELTS): THE SPEAKING TEST[1]

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ABSTRACT

One of the more innovative aspects of the recently released IELTS test is the Speaking sub-test. This paper deals with the nature of the IELTS Speaking test, outlines the form it takes, discusses the more innovative aspects of it (especially the attempt made to transfer initiative from the interviewer to the candidate), considers the way in which the interview is to be conducted and how reliability is to be achieved.

INTRODUCTION

The International English Language Testing System is an international test designed to assess the general English proficiency and the proficiency in English for special (in particular, academic) purposes of non-native English speakers wishing to undertake an academic study programme, train, or learn English in English-speaking countries. The test is the result of a joint project of Britain and Australia together with some formal participation from Canada and assistance in certain areas from testers elsewhere. The test is intended to be administered on a mass scale, virtually on demand anywhere in the world, and by persons who, for practical including financial reasons, may have received only a minimum of training in the administration of the test. These factors (the international nature of the test, its aim to measure both general proficiency and ESP/EAP, its large-scale use, and the use of relatively untrained administrators) have had a profound influence on all aspects of the test but, in particular, on the test of Speaking

LLE (1991) 1,1:101-114

proficiency.

It is necessary to observe at the outset of this paper that the IELTS is a secure test and the training materials are also regarded as secure. Hence, for the most part, the items given as examples do not occur in any live version of the test. Some of the examples used are taken from the specimen or exemplar test, which is publicly available and is used to inform candidates about what to expect in the test.

NATURE OF THE SPEAKING TEST

The IELTS has two components, a General component aimed at measuring the candidate's general proficiency, and a so-called Modular component, which assesses the candidate's proficiency in reading and writing in a broad disciplinary area relevant to those reading and writing skills needed for academic study or training. In order to cater for candidates of a wide range of proficiency, the General component is focused around Band 4, and the Modular EAP/ESP component is focused around Band 6 on the 9-band IELTS scales, without the possibility of assessing above and below these levels being excluded. The Speaking test is in the General component, though, by its nature, it is able to assess candidates throughout the proficiency range (or at least from Band 3 to Band 9), and the phases of the test are graduated in order to facilitate coverage of this broad proficiency range.

The principal constraining factors on the design of the Speaking test include the following:

1. In order to constrain administrative costs, the overall administration time for the whole of the IELTS was not to exceed 150 minutes and the Speaking test was set for a range between 11 and 15 minutes.
2. It was believed that an oral interview was the best means by which to assess candidates' practical speaking skills and so the IELTS Speaking test is a 'direct' test in which the candidates are encouraged to speak while their language is observed by the

interviewer and matched against a proficiency scale or nine-point 'Band Scale'.

3. Because the test is to be administered anywhere in the world, often in circumstances in which relatively little control can be exercised over the selection and skills of interviewers, and because concern had been expressed at the apparent unreliability of the Speaking component of the British Council's former ELTS test, the IELTS Speaking test was designed to exercise more constraint over what the interviewers could do in the interview, i.e., it is a closely structured rather than a free interview, and mechanisms have been set up by which to monitor both the quality of the interview and the assessments assigned.

4. Because, in an English-speaking academic or training environment, students or trainees are expected to ask questions, seek information, and seek assistance when it is needed, it was considered essential that the Speaking test provide the opportunity for candidates to take the initiative rather than just respond to questions and other direction-giving utterances from the interviewer. Consequently, two of the five phases of the interview deliberately give the candidate the opportunity to take the initiative, to speak at length on some topic of interest to him or herself (Phase 2), and, especially, to ask questions with minimal guidance (Phase 3).

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Speaking test is to assess the candidate's general proficiency in speaking in everyday situations. The test is designed to elicit the candidate's maximum speaking proficiency, which is then rated against the Band Scale. The emphasis of the test is on measuring candidates' practical skills in everyday situations relevant to the candidates (i.e., that they could conceivably

be in) rather than their formal knowledge of grammar, vocabulary or other elements of the language. Item writers are instructed to develop activities that focus on specified purposes, tasks, skills and functions and that allow candidates to demonstrate their level of proficiency in general rather than academic contexts.

STRUCTURE OF THE INTERVIEW

The Speaking test is a structured oral interview that leads candidates through activities requiring progressively higher proficiency levels. Though a choice of activities is provided for each phase of the test and the interviewer is required to select from these, it is stressed also that the interview must be conducted flexibly so that the interviewer can choose an alternative activity if one does not work or seems to have provoked a rote-memorised utterance, so that a wide proficiency range can be catered for in any activity, and so that test security is not too readily breached. Interviewers are required to proceed through all the phases, except with very low level candidates who are manifestly unable to proceed, though the recommended times for each phase may differ slightly, e.g., higher level candidates may proceed more rapidly through the earlier phases and spend a little longer on later phases where their higher proficiency levels are more readily demonstrated and, with lower level candidates, more time may be spent on earlier phases. The interview is intended to flow as far as possible like a normal conversation, albeit a guided and structured conversation, and hence interviewers are required to ensure that smooth bridges are provided, as far as possible, from one phase to the next.

The interview is in five phases:

Phase 1 is the Introduction. Its focus is at Band 3 level though more proficient candidates may well perform at higher levels. It is intended to last from 1 to 2 minutes. Its purpose is to allow interviewers to introduce themselves, to exchange greetings, to check the candidate's identity, and to settle the candidate down ready for the main part of the interview. The main skills and functions elicited in this phase are listed in the specifications as:

using social formulae, providing personal information, and providing general factual information.

Phase 2 is Extended Discourse and is designed to give the candidate an opportunity to take the initiative and to speak at length on some topic well known to the candidate such as some aspect of his or her own culture, place of living or country of origin. It focuses around Bands 3 to 4 and should last 3 to 4 minutes, with the candidate doing most of the talking and the interviewer mainly using stimulus questions or comments to prompt the candidate should he or she 'dry up'. The main skills and functions elicited include providing general factual information, expressing likes and dislikes, giving directions and instructions, describing and comparing, narrating events and sequences of events, and explaining how something works.

Phase 3 is the Elicitation phase and is of particular importance since, because students in English-speaking academic programmes are expected to ask questions and take initiative in communication situations, this phase reverses the usual interviewer-dominated situation, gives the initiative to the candidate, and requires the candidate to ask questions of the interviewer. For this reason, the bridge into Phase 3 from Phase 2 is recommended to be more overt than between other phases and the interviewer is required to state categorically to the candidate that, in this phase, he or she is to ask questions. The phase lasts 3 to 5 minutes and uses activities accessible in the Band 3 to 6 range based on information-gap activities. The main skills and functions focused on are: eliciting general factual information; eliciting information about objects, events and sequences of events; eliciting opinions, attitudes and values; and eliciting explanations of how something works or why something is the case.

Phase 4 is Speculation and Attitudes. It lasts 3 to 4 minutes, is especially designed to allow candidates in the Band 5 to 6 range or higher to demonstrate their proficiency, and involves activities which require the candidate to speculate, express ideas, attitudes and plans with some precision, to demonstrate the ability to switch register, and, in particular, to use language relevant to their

particular academic, vocational or other interests. The main skills and functions focused on in this phase include providing general, personal and factual information; expressing opinions, intentions, attitudes and emotions; describing and comparing objects, events and sequences of events; and speculating on future events and their consequences.

Phase 5 is the Conclusion. The interviewer rounds off the interview, and drops the activities back to the level of the candidate so that the interview ends with the candidate performing at his or her own level. This phase lasts about one minute and entails, as the main skills and functions, using social formulae, saying farewell, and thanking.

ACTIVITIES

Since, as noted earlier, the IELTS is a secure test, it is not possible to give actual samples of the activities that comprise the Speaking test but an indication can be given of the sorts of activities that occur. Where examples are quoted below, they have been taken from the publicly available exemplar or specimen test. A considerable number of actual activities are proposed for each phase in each version of the test and interviewers are required to select from those specified. The emphasis in the activities is on realistic activities that candidates could conceivably be involved in, especially on arrival in the country to which they are going. Role play by the candidate is specifically ruled out because it entails things other than language proficiency (e.g., dramatic ability, imagination, and the ability of the interviewer to create a situation) and the candidate is always required to be him or herself.

In *Phase 1*, candidates are required to answer simple questions about their name, their family, their home locality, and their interests. In *Phase 2*, candidates are given the opportunity to speak at length on some topic well-known to them. Thus, for example, they could be asked to talk about the local food, how it is prepared and how it is eaten, or they might be asked to discuss such things as theatre, festivals, dancing, games or sports in their

own country. The interviewer is advised to give the candidate the chance to talk about more than one topic if that is necessary in order to elicit extended speech. *Phase 3* activities give the initiative to the candidates and require them to ask questions in information-gap tasks with particular emphasis on tasks that students studying or training overseas are commonly involved in. For example, the candidate could be given a sketch map of an area with instructions to ask questions of the interviewer (who has a detailed map) to find their way to a certain building; or the candidate might be given a timetable showing lectures and other study activities and be told to ask the interviewer (who has a complete language laboratory schedule), questions, so as to write into the timetable some private language laboratory practice sessions. In this phase, simple artefacts containing minimal language may be used (e.g., a map, a photograph, a diagram) and the candidate is given a cue card with a very short, simply worded instruction and three or four one or two-word suggestions as to things to ask about. At present, the specifications require that all candidates be given the cue card, though some of those who have worked on the development of the test believe that the cue card should be used only if the candidate 'dries up' and needs suggestions as to what to talk about. There is a need for research as to whether the cue card should be used only if needed, and whether the optional use of the cue card makes the test more or less valid and reliable. *Phase 4* requires candidates to speculate and so the interviewer leads them to talk about their future plans, their hopes and ambitions, the relevance to their country of what they are planning to do, and so on. To assist the interviewer with this phase, all candidates are asked, prior to the interview, to fill out a brief curriculum vitae. *Phase 5* involves a brief reference to something that might already have been discussed, it usually grows straight out of that, had been discussed in Phase 4, and it leads to expressions of farewell and good wishes.

Whereas other pencil and paper test types depend largely on statistical validation procedures for their validity and reliability, interview-based tests depend heavily on the quality of training of

the interviewers and raters. For this reason, the Speaking test will be administered only by trained ESL teachers who have undergone a short training programme in interviewing for the IELTS. This training programme includes discussion of the principles of 'direct' proficiency assessment, an introduction to the documentation of the test (see below), discussion of the principles of interviewing and rating, viewing, discussing and rating videotaped interviews, and conducting live interviews. Subsequently, interviewers undergoing training are required to conduct interviews onto tape and rate them successfully before they will be certificated to conduct interviews. In addition, the training package contains documentation explaining the Speaking test and its conduct, an administration manual, and videotaped material - comprising a 30-minute introduction to the Speaking test and twenty-two 11- to 15-minute interviews with commentaries - that can be used as a basis for discussing interviewing and for practising rating. All interviewers will be required to work through the training package at regular intervals if their certification is to remain valid.

In addition to the training given to interviewers, it is proposed that a cross-section of the interviews they conduct will be monitored. For this purpose, all interviews will be taped and one in ten of the interviews of each interviewer will be chosen at random for return to Britain or Australia for moderation to ensure that the quality of their interviewing is not declining and that their ratings remain valid and reliable.

TEST DOCUMENTATION

The Speaking test is accompanied by the following documentation:

1. The specifications provide explicit guidance to item-writers on the preparation of future parallel forms of the test. The specifications include statements on the general purpose of the IELTS and the Speaking test in particular, the test focus, cultural appropriateness (a complex issue in an international test developed by two

culturally distinct countries), the structure of the test, scoring and interpretation, and administration of the test. Probably the most important of these sections is that on the structure of the test; this outlines the phases of the test and specifies the content of each in terms of its purpose, band focus, tasks and stimuli, and skills and functions.

2. An Assessment Guide or training manual has been prepared to give potential interviewers training in how to conduct the Speaking test. It is accompanied by videotaped excerpts from interviews and some complete interviews which illustrate points raised in the manual. A more formal training manual has also been written and is intended as notes that can be used in conducting training sessions for interviewers. The introductory video and set of twenty-two videotaped interviews for training purposes referred to earlier are also available.

3. The Administration Manual gives procedural guidance to interviewers and administrators.

4. There is an exemplar or specimen test which is available to candidates and provides a brief example of the sorts of things candidates can expect in each phase of the Speaking test.

5. The Speaking Band Scale is the rating scale against which candidates' speaking proficiency is rated. It consists of nine band levels from zero to native-like, each of which is a short behavioural description of the Speaking ability to be observed at that level. A copy of the present form of the Speaking Band Scale is in the appendix to this paper.

FUTURE RESEARCH

To date, the Speaking test has been completed in its initial form, a specimen test has been written, the other documentation referred

to above has been prepared, the videotaped training material has been completed, and the last tapes are about to be released. The formal trials of the IELTS have included some attention to the Speaking test though much more research into aspects of the test is expected in future. A few from amongst the many issues that should be considered include:

1. The validity and reliability of the test, its relationship with the other sub-tests of IELTS, and its relationship with other tests such as TOEFL and ASLPR; though the trials to date have done some of this with satisfactory results, earlier drafts of the IELTS were used and interviewer training programmes were not entirely satisfactory.
2. The validity and reliability of the scale, in particular the extent to which different raters, in different countries, assessing candidates speaking different target varieties of English, provide the same ratings.
3. The effect of different strategies within the test, e.g., giving the cue card at the start of Phase 3 or withholding it until (and if) it becomes necessary.
4. The effect of using lay persons (as opposed to trained ESL teachers) as interviewers and the effect of specific training on interviewing and rating on the validity and reliability of the test.
5. The validity and reliability of the IELTS structured interview in comparison with the freer interview used with scales such as the ASLPR or FSI.
6. The predictive validity of the test for candidates entering academic or other training programmes.
7. The effect of the interview situation, e.g., a formal across-the-table interview as against a more relaxed situation.
8. Comparison between a global rating scale such as the present band scale with more analytic scales such as are proposed for assessing the IELTS writing scripts.
9. Comparison between ratings assigned by the

interviewer and those assigned by a separate rater and between live ratings and ratings of audio- or video-recorded interviews.

10. The monitoring and moderation process, how to manage it, and its effects on the validity and reliability of the test.

11. The effect of interviewer fatigue on the candidate's demonstrated level of proficiency and how to counter such interference.

NOTES

1. Presented to the 1990 RELC Regional Seminar "Language Testing and Language Programme Evaluation", RELC, Singapore, 9-12 April, 1990. Adapted from a paper by D. E. Ingram and Elaine Wylie presented at the Language Testing Research Colloquium, San Francisco, 2-5 March, 1990.

APPENDIX 1: DRAFT BAND SCALE FOR SPEAKING

(Version drafted 19-7-89 by Greg Deakin, Elaine Wylie and David Ingram and revised 16-8-89)

9. Speech is fluent, situationally appropriate and fully acceptable in all features though a slight non-intrusive accent may be observed.
8. Communicates effectively on all general, academic, vocational or leisure topics relevant to own interests and experiences. Speech is fluent and readily comprehensible though occasional non-systematic errors in grammar, vocabulary and sometimes a strong accent may occur without impeding communication. Can use speculative, argumentative, descriptive, and narrative language flexibly to convey precise meanings. Extended structuring including cohesive features is accurate and appropriate. Can vary the language to suit situational (i.e., register) requirements with only occasional inappropriacies.
7. Communicates effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics. Occasional errors in vocabulary, and structure may occur without inhibiting communication. Communicates readily and fairly precisely using complex sentence forms and a wide range of modifiers, connectives and cohesive features. Displays some flexibility in the use of speculative, argumentative, descriptive and narrative language. Can generally vary the language to suit situational (i.e., register) requirements) and can talk on own subject area with ease and fluency.
6. Generally communicates effectively on general topics and on other matters relevant to own immediate academic, vocational or leisure interests. Can use complex sentence forms and a wide range of modifiers, connectives, and cohesive features to convey most meanings fairly precisely though errors in grammar and vocabulary may occur and occasionally interfere with communication. Is generally able to use circumlocution

to cover gaps in vocabulary and structure. Can present speculation, extended argument, and long or complex description or narration though errors in structure or coherence may sometimes occur. Shows some skill in varying language to suit situational (i.e., register) requirements.

5. Is broadly able to convey meaning on most general topics though errors in structure and vocabulary may interfere with communication. Can engage in extended conversation on most general topics, generally making use of relevant connectives and other cohesive features. Has some ability to use complex sentence forms and modifiers. However, has difficulty in presenting speculation and extended argument, while long or complex description or narration may lose coherence. Lacks flexibility and is unable to vary language significantly to suit situational (i.e., register) requirements.
4. Can convey basic meaning on familiar topics. Can give uncomplicated directions and use common question forms to elicit information (though not necessarily with correct word order). Has control of basic sentence forms but longer utterances tend to break down. Can link simple sentences using the most frequently occurring connectives. Errors in grammar and vocabulary are frequent and may interfere with communication. Tentative use of modifiers limits ability to describe, give precise information or express attitudes. Pronunciation may often be faulty and impede communication.
3. Can convey only simple meaning on very familiar topics. Can answer simple questions and respond to simple statements. Has only limited ability to take the initiative with original statements and questions. Basic sentence forms appear to be used though grammatical errors are numerous except in memorised utterances. Essentially no ability to link sentences or use modifiers. Pronunciation is likely to be strongly influenced by the first language and to significantly impede communication.
2. Little communication is possible except for the most rudimentary information using very limited vocabulary. Utterances consist of isolated words or short memorised

phrases. Frequent pauses may occur as the candidate searches for words. Pronunciation is strongly influenced by the first language and is often unintelligible.

1. Essentially unable to speak English. Limited to at most a very few isolated words, memorised utterances or fragments of virtually no communicative significance.
0. Candidate did not attempt interview. No assessable information provided.

APPENDIX 2:GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN BAND SCALE

accent: refers to all phonological features including pronunciation and suprasegmental features (e.g., stress, rhythm and intonation).

cohesive features: those words and morphemes that serve to link parts of sentences and texts to each other and to the context. They include such things as morphological features, pronouns, demonstratives and connectives.

connectives: linking devices such as conjunctions, relative pronouns, sentence adverbials (e.g., *however, nevertheless).*

modifiers: words, phrases and clauses such as adjectives, adverbs, adjectival and adverbial phrases and clauses and other qualifying forms that serve to modify or elaborate meaning, to refine it, or to make it more precise or imprecise.

registers: the different forms that a language takes as a result of variations that occur in response to changes in the situation (q.v.).

situations: the total setting within which the language occurs, including the physical location, time, the persons involved and their moods, relationships, and personal characteristics, the purpose of the language act, the subject matter being discussed, the mode in which the language occurs (e.g., oral or written), and so on.